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A strong spirit

Pastor stays positive through devastating illness

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QUOTE OF NOTE:

"My early work was a lot simpler."
- Local artist Christopher Gurshin

See story page 29

ON THE COVER

Pastor Nancy Butler is coping with Lou Gehrig's Disease with grace and dignity.

Photo by Brian Ambrose
See story page 17

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YOUR THOUGHTS

From paper bags to plastic trays, fish sticks to carrot sticks, American chop suey to grilled cheese sandwiches, many of us have fond memories of school lunches. We took to the streets to find out what your favorite lunches were when you were going to school. Here's some of what you said:

Mara Dresner photos

Emmy Lou DeBari

My mother always used to make my lunches and my favorite was ham and cheese on rye bread. And, the fallback was peanut butter and jelly.

Bessy Moren

I always took lunches from home. I was a cafeteria food snob. My favorite probably was a ham sandwich. There always seemed to be grapes, Goldfish crackers and banana bread. We always packed a large lunch and always in a brown paper bag.

Greg Tinti

I'd have to go with pasta with meat sauce on Wednesdays. Either that, or personal pizzas.

Serving up hundreds of thousands of meals

School lunch program balances nutrition, taste

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

You know the challenges you have trying to come up with meals that everyone in your family enjoys? How you try to manage everyone's preferences, pickiness and favorites, all while attempting to put a balanced meal on the table? Multiply that by one hundred thousand or so and you get an idea of the challenge that faces Jessica D'Agnese, a registered dietitian who is the food service director for the Glastonbury Public Schools.

"Our goal is simple – to continue to provide good nutrition for all children by offering healthy school meal options," she said. "In Glastonbury, we served 408,000 school meals last year." She said Connecticut is a leader in provide nutritious meals to its students.

"While school lunch programs continue to face obstacles related to limited funds and increasing food costs, Connecticut school food service directors have made dramatic progress in improving the quality of meals served to children each and every day," she said. "Connecticut continues to be a national leader in providing healthier meals, and our number one goal is the nutritional wellbeing of students. While school food service directors provide fruits, vegetables and healthy foods during the school day, we also consistently work to encourage parents to promote this healthy eating style in the home as well. We know that consistency is key and very important to students for better health. They won't always consume food at school if they aren't introduced to it at home, so it's an important partnership that we're always working on."

School lunches also must comply with the recently released "2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans," produced every five years by U.S. departments of Health and Human Services and Agriculture. The main purpose of the guidelines is to inform the development of federal food, nutrition, and health policies and programs. Its primary audiences are policymakers, and nutrition and health professionals. The guidelines inform a number of national programs, including the USDA's national school lunch Program and breakfast programs, which feed more than 30 million children each school day.

D'Agnese said that Glastonbury won't need to make changes based on the release of this information.

"While the Dietary Guidelines for Americans may have affected some programs, here in Connecticut, we are ahead of the curve, so our students here have been offered meals that met or exceeded these standards for many years," she said. "In fact, the State of Connecticut has its own Connecticut Nutrition Standards which is separate from the federal school meals program that focuses on moderating calories, limiting fat, saturated fat, sodium and sugars, eliminating trans fats and promoting more nutrient-dense foods such as whole grains, fruits, vegetables, low-fat and nonfat dairy products, lean meats, legumes, and nuts and seeds. Schools that choose to follow Connecticut nutrition standards and implement the healthy food option receive Healthy Food Certification from the State of Connecticut, and Glastonbury has proudly been participating in this program for the past 10 years."

Courtesy photo

Jessica D'Agnese, food service director for the Glastonbury Public Schools, said school lunches include local produce when possible.

D'Agnese is an active member of the School Nutrition Association of Connecticut.

"The mission of our association is to continually educate and support our members to advance good nutrition in Connecticut communities," said Lonnie Burt, a registered dietitian, the senior director of food and child nutrition services for Hartford Public Schools and president of the association. "Studies have shown that school meals are the most balanced, nutritious meal you're going to see in a lunchroom. In Connecticut. We have been a national leader in school meals that meet or exceed all federal regulations. People should be very proud of the advancements that we have made in school nutrition here in Connecticut."

Of course, nutrition is just one part of the equation. Finding foods that kids like is equally important.

"Breakfast for lunch is always a hit especially when it includes our yogurt parfaits. The students also really like chicken and at the high school level, the spicier the better. We have deli bars in Gideon Welles, Smith Middle and the high school. The students like having the ability to create their own

sandwich," D'Agnese said. "Although we have been offering a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables well before the mandates, students are definitely consuming more of these items. There are times students will ask if they can take an extra serving of fruit which we are glad to provide. We are fortunate to be in a town where there are farms and are able to offer local fruit when available. Students, especially in the older grades, have been more open to trying new items such as butternut squash or kale. It may take a few times of offering these for some students to try them but the more they are exposed to them at school and at home, the more likely they are to try them."

Dondero Orchards in South Glastonbury provides produce for both the Glastonbury and West Hartford school systems.

"We start when school opens and that time of year, we supply apples, peaches, plums, pears and tomatoes," said Sandy Dondero, who has four children in local schools. "We just continue to carry them until the season's over. Apples we continue to supply usually until Easter. It seems to be a good bond for both the school systems and us, obviously the nutritional value of local produce and the community benefits of the farm being able to extend its season. It really is a good sense of pride knowing they're eating something local and something they produced as well."

Some meals are cooked in every school, such as pizza on Fridays. Other entrees, such as pasta on Tuesdays, are cooked at the three large schools – Glastonbury High School, Smith Middle School and Gideon Welles School – and sent out to the elementary schools.

No matter where the cooking takes place, D'Agnese said that people should be proud of the town's school lunch program.

"I think one of the most important things for people to know is that school lunches here in Connecticut are the healthiest they have ever been. In Connecticut, we are serving fresh fruits and vegetables every day – such as apples, watermelon, sweet potatoes, red beans, broccoli, butternut squash, fresh herbs and much more. We use locally grown produce every chance opportunity we get, as well," she said. "We recognize the challenges when it comes to high rates of childhood obesity and the lack of a balanced diet, and have been working hard to assist in the effort to provide our kids with affordable, healthy, fresh and delicious food options." **GL**

Learn more about the guidelines at health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015.

1 Follow a healthy eating pattern across the lifespan. All food and beverage choices matter. Choose a healthy eating pattern at an appropriate calorie level to help achieve and maintain a healthy body weight, support nutrient adequacy, and reduce the risk of chronic disease.
2 Focus on variety, nutrient density, and amount. To meet nutrient needs within calorie limits, choose a variety of nutrient-dense foods across and within all food groups in recommended amounts.
3 Limit calories from added sugars and saturated fats and reduce sodium intake. Consume an eating pattern low in added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium. Cut back on foods and beverages higher in these components to amounts that fit within healthy eating patterns.
4 Shift to healthier food and beverage choices. Choose nutrient-dense foods and beverages across and within all food groups in place of less healthy choices. Consider cultural and personal preferences to make these shifts easier to accomplish and maintain.
5 Support healthy eating patterns for all. Everyone has a role in helping to create and support healthy eating patterns in multiple settings nationwide, from home to school to work to communities.
Follow a healthy eating pattern over time to help support a healthy body weight and reduce the risk of chronic disease.
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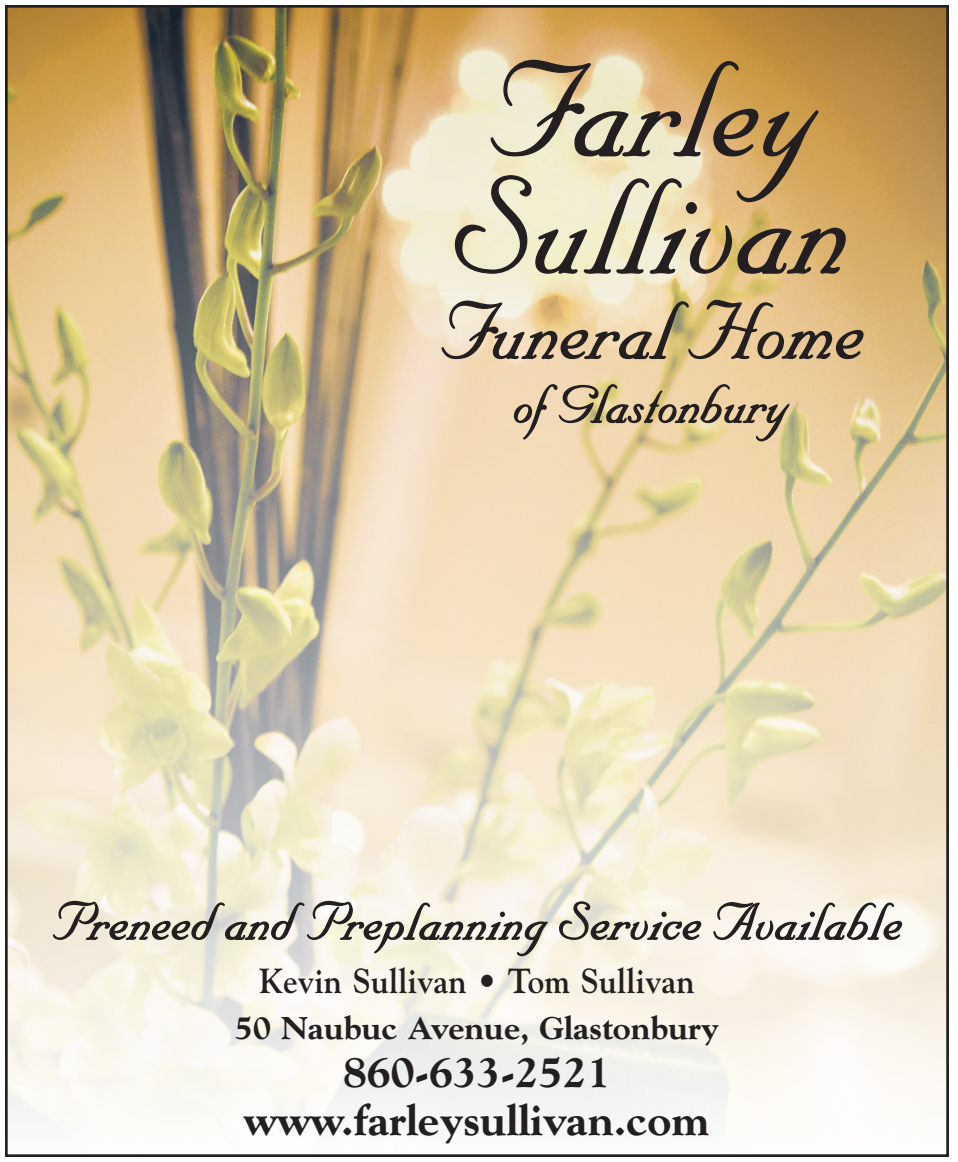

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Amy McCoy and Deborah Pagano attended the Building a Great Life Conference last fall. The conference was a celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the 40th anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Small organization, big impact

Connecticut Family Support Network helps families through the state

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

When a family has a child with a disability, they often are faced with a bewildering array of choices and information. Fortunately, the Connecticut Family Support Network is there to help.

The nonprofit got its start as a council created by the former Department of Mental Retardation, now known as the Department of Developmental Services, in 1994 to ensure that families who had children with developmental disabilities would have access to information about what was happening in the state regarding disability services.

"We were essentially offered a seat at the table, working with policymakers and legislators. Family representatives from around the state were invited to be members of the Family Support Council," said Jen Carroll, the group's president, who served as executive director from 2003 through 2013. "Over the next three or four years, it became clear

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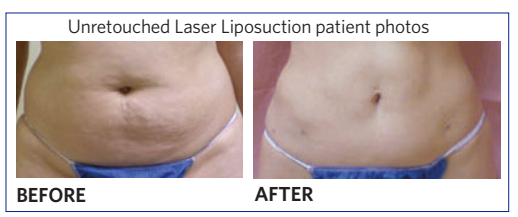

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that families from all over the state who had children with significant developmental and intellectual disabilities and other health issues couldn't get to Hartford easily once a month for meetings. It began to be clear to the council that we need to meet families where they are. So the council in 1998, through a federal grant to what is now DDS, created the Family Support Network, and hired six people to serve as regional liaisons of the council who would then create networks in six different regions of the state and be able to bring resources and support to families from the council [through] mini councils or mini networks as it were."

To ensure that the organization would continue to have life after the federal grant ran out, Carroll pushed for the group to obtain its nonprofit status, which it received in 2009.

"I knew, having served as director of the network, it was vital for funding purposes and to serve more families," Carroll said. "You open yourselves up to being able to access various different types of funding sources not just agency contracts. You can apply for different types of grants; you can fundraise; you can even create billable values like trainings or workshops; you can end up having a product in addition to contracting for services."

While she is quick to give credit to others, Carroll, a Glastonbury resident, is closely tied to the organization.

"It's like my baby," she said.

As with everyone involved with the organization, she knows firsthand what it's like to advocate for a child with disabilities.

"What we aim to do is support families who are raising a child of any age with any disability by helping them make connections."

–Amy McCoy

"For many people when you have a child diagnosed with significant developmental disabilities, intellectual disabilities, special health-care needs, it can be an overwhelming new world to have to enter," she said. "To have access to people who have walked in your shoes, to understand all of the time and learning that needs to happen in terms of navigating the incredibly complex service system and to have access to other parents going through what you're going through, connecting with the organization has so much to offer; it's invaluable. My husband and I have four children, three daughters and one son – his name is Jamie [now 21]. He has cerebral palsy and he has an intellectual disability. Through learning his needs and what his life would be and understanding our need to become experts in advocacy and in understanding a system that we were totally unaware even existed, sort of propelled me to say, 'Hey, if I'm learning all of this and doing all this homework, how can I help someone else do less of this work?'"

On an individual level, that might mean obtaining health care or special education. There's also a bigger picture.

"Advocacy more on the macro level is how do we ensure that the state of Connecticut is providing supports to individuals and families that are vital through the lifespan of somebody who cannot advocate for themselves?" Carroll said. "We have friends and family around us in our community who have embraced Jamie and supported him in ways we never imagined and have also joined us in legislative advocacy because they are gaining an understanding that [the] support is necessary. It has to come from state as well."

Amy McCoy has been involved with the network for four years and serves as one of three family support coordinators in its north region. She and Pat Stavola, also a support coordinator in the north region, are Glastonbury residents.

"What we aim to do is support families who are raising a child of any age with any disability by helping them make connections," McCoy said.

That could mean finding a support group or asking a question about a state service.

"Sometimes parents don't really know what they're looking for. We

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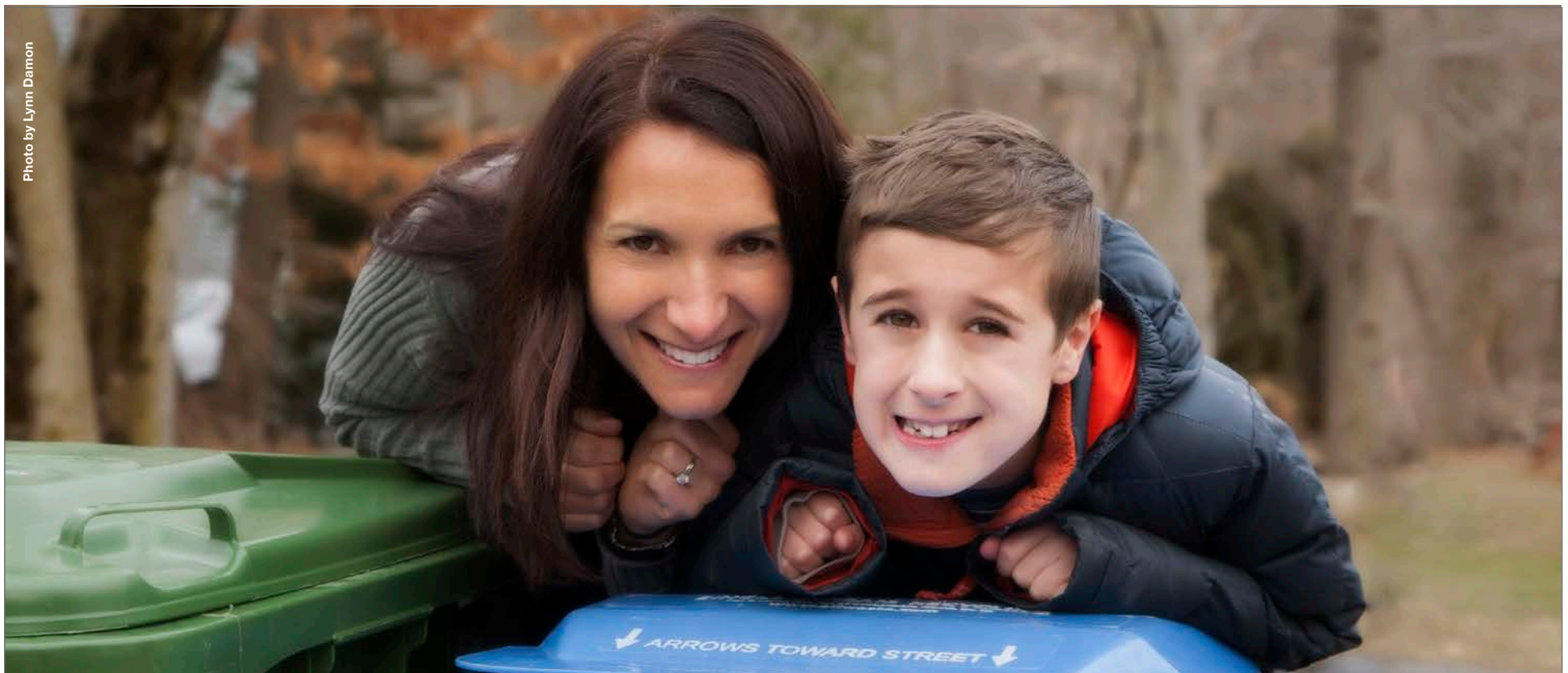

Amy McCoy, a family support coordinator with the Connecticut Family Support Network, poses with her son Matthew, now 11

are there to guide them on the journey. There are a lot of state agencies. A lot of parents don't have an awareness of the state agencies and what benefits their child can start receiving," she said. "Sometimes parents call with a specific question about special education. I would say a majority of calls are about special education, needing help preparing for meetings with the school, looking for guidance with communication, how to communicate best, giving support and guidance how to work collaboratively with the school. We do support the parents one-to-one over the phone. Our goal is to help parents to become their child's best advocate so parents can walk

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into school meetings with confidence, how to ask for services and how to work as a team with the school."

The network also helps parents as their children move through different ages, from the program for children from birth to three, through school and post-graduate programs. But, it's not just about academic programs.

"A lot of parents struggle trying to find recreational and social opportunities for their child who has disabilities or special needs," McCoy said.

The group is hosting an event in February that will feature summer programs, such as camps. They sponsor a conference every fall, as well, called "One Voice," which features a variety of speakers. The event is free to parents.

"It's a day for parents to feel like they are a part of something bigger and feel proud of who they are and who their child is, to gain support from other parents, to feel less isolated and more supported on their journey of raising a child with special needs or disabilities," McCoy said.

The annual sold-out conference illustrates how much need there is for the network.

"Parents who are raising children with disabilities are often isolated from the general community," McCoy said. "Resources are not made known to them. It is important for parents who are raising children with disabilities to feel less isolated and that can happen by meeting other parents who also have children with disabilities. Parents need to feel they are not alone. Other families also have children with disabilities and are also going through similar experiences. Parents often don't know where to turn to get information about the future, about state agencies, where to get information. We are that source of information in Connecticut."

"It's really about the information and the networking, both for practical knowledge and emotional support."

–Jen Carroll

She added, "We are often the first point of contact for parents after receiving a new diagnosis for their child. It is comforting to hear from another parent who really 'gets it' after receiving a new diagnosis for your own child."

McCoy began to attend support groups when her son was 18 months old, later facilitating her own groups.

"For me personally, I was lucky to attend a parent support group when my son was under two years old. We lived in New York at the time, and the special education program he attended included a weekly time for parents to connect. It was so comforting for me to realize that I was not alone, that there were plenty of other parents raising children with special needs. We were learning and growing together. Once I realized how important these connections were to me, the connections with other parents of children with special needs, I knew I had to continue to either locate these groups when we moved to Connecticut or to start my own groups. I ended up doing both," McCoy said. "Since my son has several different diagnoses, I feel that I am able to give support to parents who have children with

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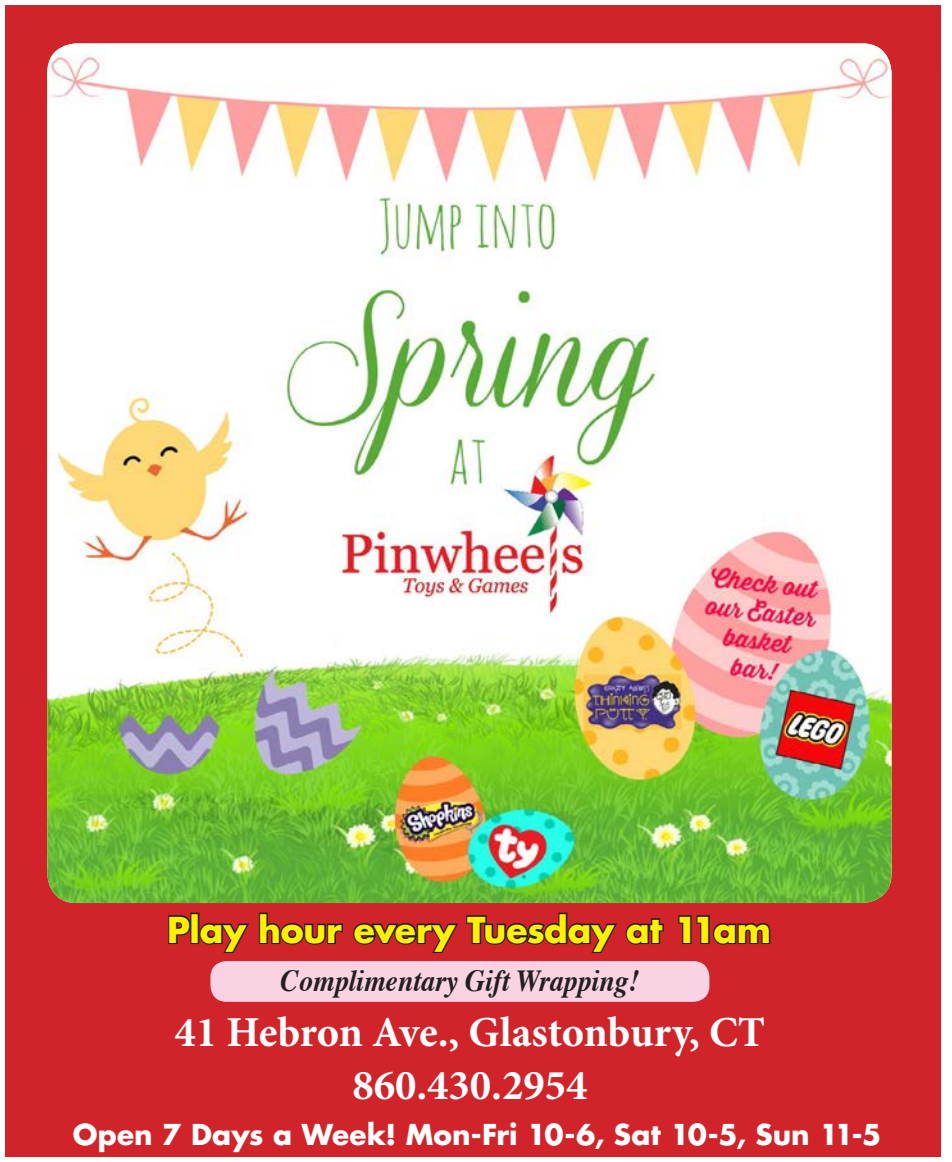

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those diagnoses. It's a positive place where parents can receive support, guidance and continue to build their own network of support."

There are two support groups in Glastonbury that are open to parents from any surrounding town.

"Our family support coordinators are all parents who are raising children with special needs and disabilities so we are walking in the same shoes as the families we are supporting and helping," she said. "Our personal experiences and professional training have made it possible for us to guide families on this journey of raising a child with special needs or disabilities."

That connection can be invaluable.

"It's really about the information and the networking, both for practical knowledge and emotional support," Carroll said. "I think what's the most important thing is that there is somebody near you in your community that can help, that can help connect you to other people and knowledge around disability advocacy. An organization like the Family Support Network is an example of a small organization with a very modest operating budget that is making a huge impact on the many, many lives across the state. Supporting small nonprofits like Family Support Network is vital to their ability to continue to do their work."

All of the Family Support Network's services are free. In addition to support groups and connecting one-to-one with parents via telephone, email and Facebook, offering information, emotional support, advocacy and guidance, the group also holds workshops and trainings across the state for parents and professionals on a wide variety of topics including special education, transition, recreation and communication. The group also collaborates with local and state agencies, community groups and other non-profit organizations to provide access to resources and support, as well as sharing information on disability issues and resources.

"Connecting with other families is a critical source of support and information for parents and families who have a child with a disability. The Department of Developmental Services is very pleased to partner with the Connecticut Family Support Network to offer families opportunities to attend family support groups, participate in training and informational sessions, and network with other families. [The network] provides opportunities for parents to have mentors, particularly new parents, who can learn from and share with other parents who have similar experiences. This network provides really significant assistance so that families can connect with other families and even form communities that are mutually supportive to them and their children," said Morna A. Murray, commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services. "It is one of the most important things we can offer families: a sense of community and support so that they do not feel isolated, they do not feel alone, but rather they feel the support of parents and families who have gone before them and can walk with them on a challenging but incredibly loving and rewarding journey." **GL**

Learn more at ctfsn.org or facebook.com/ctfsn. Two support groups for parents raising children with special needs or disabilities are offered in Glastonbury, one during the day on the first Tuesday of the month and the other on the first Thursday evening of the month. To be added to the distribution list for these groups or for further information about the support group or summer camp information session, email Amy McCoy at amccoy@ctfsn.org.

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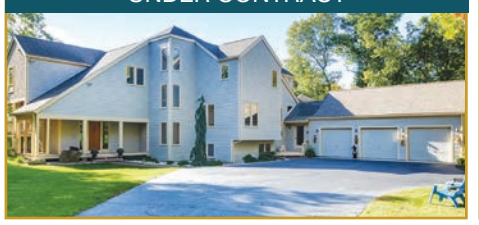

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Student of the month

Lekhaa Meenakshisundaram's personal motto is "Love and Peace = A Better World." It's one of many reasons the Buttonball fifth-grader is this month's student of the month.

Lekhaa is active in the Buttonball Leadership Team, the school chorus and orchestra, and the jump rope team and is a kindergarten helper who makes sure the youngest students are ready to board their buses at the end of the day.

When she's not at school, Lekhaa loves to read. When it's warm outside, she enjoys hanging out with her friends, and when it's cold she plays with her sister. She plays violin and takes swimming and gymnastics lessons.

In addition to her motto, Lekhaa's favorite words of wisdom are "It doesn't matter how you look physically, but how you act is what really counts."

Her teacher, Mrs. Worski praised Lekhaa for her class work, which she said is a reflection of her positive attitude toward learning and constant effort, and her willingness to help others, which she said is evidence of Lekhaa's thoughtfulness and compassion.

Lekhaa's friends admire her for many reasons. Fifth-grade classmate Brooke Monsarrat said, "Lekhaa's always a good friend to everyone without even trying. She's one of my best friends and she's so kind to everyone, even when she is in a bad mood." Prudhvi Paruchuru, a third-grade friend, said simply, "She helps me with everything." GL

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Brian Ambrose photo

Lynn Damon, shown with her husband, Joe, is Glastonbury's Business Person of the Year.

Lynn Damon honored for her art and her philanthropy

Chamber business person of the year works to help others

by Nancy Thompson
Editor

Lynn Damon is well known for her timeless photographs of people, places and pets. She is perhaps less well known for her personal story and her work to help others.

That combination – her success in business, her personal strength and her untiring work on behalf of others – led to her being named Glastonbury Business Person of the Year by the Connecticut Valley Chamber of Commerce.

"Lynn Damon is one of the most selfless, kind and philanthropic people I know," said Mary Ellen Dombrowski, the chamber's president. "With her own life full of challenges, Lynn's passion is to bring awareness and help fund those in need through her work. Lynn uses her craft to preserve memories for generations by photographing local farms, people's favorite pets and of course, people of all ages. Where ever Lynn goes, she is always a bright light, a truly amazing woman."

When life gives you lemons …

Life has not been easy for Damon. Her father, who owned the original Gino's pizza in town, was an alcoholic. Her mother, Alyce Barlow, moved out with her five children, all of whom were younger than 10. She drove a school bus and later returned to school to become a respiratory

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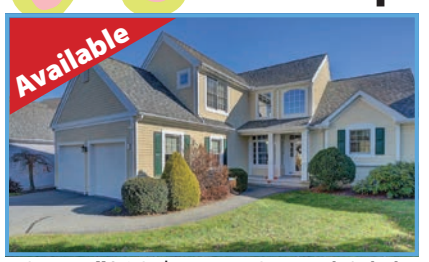

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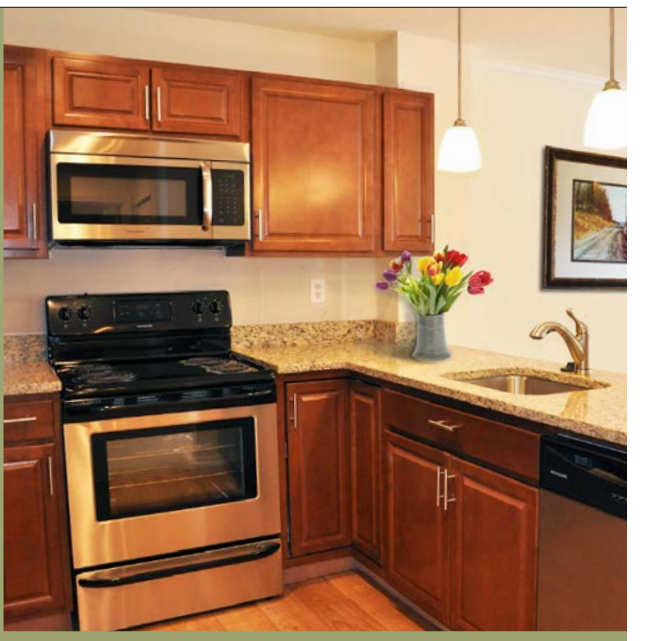

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therapist to support her family.

"She is definitely the person who has influenced me the most in my life," Damon said in dedicating her award to her mother at the chamber's annual dinner meeting.

Her sister, Jane, was born with Down Syndrome and worked for many years until her death last year at MARC, Inc. in Manchester, an organization that helps people with Down Syndrome and other disabilities.

In 1989, her daughter, Kate, was diagnosed with cancer. In 2006, her husband, Joe, suffered a brain injury in a car accident in Italy. In 2008, the Damons moved to Glastonbury, where Lynn cared for Joe in his recovery for two years.

Most recently, she learned that her granddaughter, Gianna, had been diagnosed on the autism spectrum.

Make lemonade …

Damon opened a photography studio on Naubuc Avenue and joined the local chamber in 2009. She has become known for her portraits of children, families and animals, done in an impressionistic style that has gained her acclaim with clients across southern New England and with judges nationally.

In addition to her portrait work, she has dedicated her time, talent and expertise to local causes and area charities. "Now that I've been in business over 30 years. I don't just want to take pretty pictures, I want to give back to my community," she said.

Her "Mothers and Fathers Who Inspire" series is an annual fundraising project for Autism Services & Resource Connecticut, through which she works to capture the relationship between children with special needs and their parents. Her "Mothers Who Inspire" exhibit took place at the Congregational Church in South Glastonbury last year. This year's exhibit, "Fathers Who Inspire," will take place at the church on Father's Day.

… and do good

"She has a heart of gold and has always put helping others before herself," Kevin Zingler, the executive director at MARC, Inc., said of Damon. "Lynn is a creative individual who created the 'Faces of MARC,' a photo exhibit that is installed in our lobby area that features photographs all of our individuals served by MARC. In true Lynn Damon style, each vivid and colorful photograph perfectly captured everyone's individual spirit. Every day I am amazed to see the joy on everyone's face as they glance up to see their photos and smile."

Zingler said she has done far more for the organization than the portrait exhibit. "Last year as part of the MARC Summer Concert Series, she and her family started the tradition of dedicating one night in memory of her sister Jane as 'Janie's Dance Party.' We, and more importantly the individuals we support, are grateful to have Lynn as an advocate to ensure that people with disabilities have the right to live, work and enjoy their community."

Amy McCoy met Damon about two years ago when she was looking for mothers to include in her first "Mothers Who Inspire" exhibit. "Lynn brings awareness and beauty to the special needs community," McCoy said. "She has a deep understanding of life with disabilities. She has experienced it as a sibling, a wife and a grandmother. Lynn finds the joy in life. She finds the positive in every situation. Lynn makes things happen. She comes up with these incredible ideas, like the 'Mothers Who Inspire' event, and creates a beautiful community around her ideas and events."

Damon, who said she knew when she was 16 that she wanted to become a professional photographer, holds master's of photography and photographic craftsmen degrees from the Professional Photographers of America, has served as president of the Connecticut Professional Photographers Association three times, and was chosen by the association to receive the Professional Photographers of America national award for outstanding service to professional photography. In 2014, Damon was inducted into the hall of fame of the Manchester Arts Commission, which recognizes artists, patrons or volunteers who have made outstanding contributions to any field of artistic expression.

In accepting her honor from the chamber of commerce, she urged local business people to reach out.

"I challenge you all to find a personal cause, do something to help them, get your children involved," she said. "They will be better people and it will make for a better world." **GL**

Faith helps pastor cope with devastating illness

Nancy Butler still finds reasons to laugh amid tears

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Pastor Nancy Butler can still cry. And laugh. But when she cries, she has to have someone remove her glasses and wipe her tears. And when she laughs or coughs too hard, her aide needs to reposition her arm on her wheelchair.

Butler, pastor of Riverfront Family Church, has amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, commonly known as ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease.

Her conversation is peppered with both tears and laughter, one often flowing into the other.

"I don't know if I'm crying from the ALS or because it's sad," said Butler, who is in the process of handing over the reins of the church she founded.

For Butler, coming to the church was a roundabout journey.

She's a native of Cazenovia, New York, where she and her husband, Greg, were high school sweethearts.

She was raised in the Methodist church, and when she was 9 she attended an Evangelical Bible camp.

"It was one little week. We read the Bible every day. It started my conversation with God. I didn't get that much out of the Methodist church; they were very nice people. That Bible camp experience really changed the whole trajectory of my life," said Butler, adding that her sister had a totally different perspective about the experience.

"My sister said, 'Mom sent me to that camp but I don't remember

Courtesy photo

Pastor Nancy Butler had to be carried into a church conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where she had been invited to speak about the need for progressive evangelicals, as the church was not wheelchair accessible.

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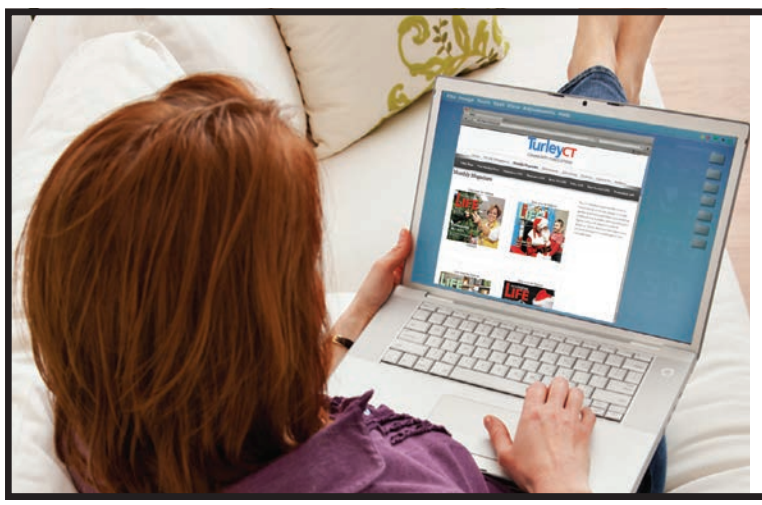

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Pastor Nancy Butler, founder of Riverfront Family Church, is pictured with physical therapist Tim Durant. Butler is battling amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

Photo by Brian Ambrose

anything about it,' she said with a laugh.

Butler attended Duke University, where she majored in religion.

"I thought about becoming a Christian education director. I had never seen a female pastor. It never dawned on me that was a real option," she said.

Her father discouraged her.

"The only job I could get was personnel manager for a defense contractor during Reagaonomics. We started with 40 employees, and in the four years I worked there, [grew to] 250 employees. I had a ball. I started training programs. I wrote our first affirmative action plan. I studied the field of human resources inside out," she said. "I was getting like 25 percent raises. We call it our Alex P. Keaton stage, with our suits and briefcases."

Still, Butler felt unfulfilled.

"I thought, 'What am I doing with my life?' We made missiles. I had wanted to be a missionary as a little girl. It was eating at me and eating at me and eating at me," she said. "Meanwhile, my husband really wanted to marry me. I really wanted to be a missionary another country. I said, 'I don't want two kids, a dog, a house in the country.' Greg said, 'I'll do that with you.' We got married, we quit our jobs in D.C., and we went to Hong Kong and worked in a refugee camp for one year. Greg hated it. I loved it. I nearly floated to work every day."

She taught English to those in the camp and also taught a Sunday school class.

With her husband so miserable, she offered to return to the States.

"I said, 'Why don't we come back? You go to law school and I'll figure out what I'll do.' I got pregnant. That was the end of my missionary dreams."

They moved from the D.C. area to Connecticut when Greg was offered a job as head of government affairs at what was then Northeast Utilities.

Butler, who had earned an M.B.A., started working for an organization that does marketing and research for life insurance companies.

After a couple of years, Butler quit her job and ended up helping a refugee from Sierra Leone.

"For a year, I was like a private social worker," she said. "During that year, while I was helping her – she lived with us for a while too – I kind of did the soul-searching again. I'm 40. What do I want to do for the rest of my life?"

Along the way she read Pastor Rick Warren's "The Purpose-Driven Church."

"I've always been entrepreneurial. I had the MBA," Butler said, adding that she had found the evangelical church's social values too backward. But when she attended the United Church of Christ, she didn't feel she fit in either.

"I would miss the high level of commitment and style of worship from evangelical," she said.

At her husband's suggestion, she decided to start a new church.

She applied to Yale Divinity School, took courses at Yale and Hartford Seminary, and was ordained seven years later.

"I purposely timed it so when my youngest daughter started college, I had all the time in the world to pour into this big dream," she said. "And I always dreamt not for a church but for a movement. A lot of younger evangelicals think gay marriage is fine; they don't believe other religions go to hell."

Her new church, Riverfront Family Church struggled at first. She started it about seven years ago in Hartford in the former G. Fox building and put an emphasis on children's programming, including hiring performers.

"We just weren't growing," she said.

Thinking they might attract more people in the suburbs, they moved to Glastonbury about three years ago. The church offices are on Hebron Avenue and the congregation holds services at the Riverfront Community Center.

"We wanted to rent the boathouse in Hartford. It was the perfect size; it looked out over the river. Riverfront Recapture brings new life to Hartford; we wanted to bring new spiritual life to Hartford. They would not rent that space to a church," Butler said. "We thought it was destiny that we ended up at the Riverfront Community Center. It's a beautiful space for us. In the summer, we meet in the gazebo that looks out over the river, the kids are on the playground."

Even with the new space, the church has been having trouble growing.

"The church is still very small. We joke that we threw the business plan out the window," Butler said. "We were paying for everything. We paid for actors, we paid for singers, we paid for dancers. We could never fund it long term. We were in a quandary. Should we pull the plug on it or what?"

The Lent before she was diagnosed with ALS, Butler prayed for guidance as to whether she should close the church.

"God was saying to me, I was trying to do it all myself," she said. "I felt like God showed me I have to delegate and train others and trust other people."

She went to her board and told them that instead of monthly meetings, they would meet every week and "pray every six steps."

"Every single person on the board said, 'That's a great idea but I don't have time,' and quit. I was asking people to meet once a week, to pray every day and to teach other people how to live this way – that was the requirement," Butler said. "If you read the Bible, people shot Jesus down all the time. Almost everybody in the church said no."

Still, her daughter and her husband, who was in law school at the time; and two other people agreed.

"Out of the whole church, only four people [said yes]," she said. "They started leading their own huddles. Thank God I did that. That was in Easter 2013. That fall, I started tripping on my own toes. If I hadn't done that, the church would have died. I was working 80 hours a week. We've been through thick and thin. We weeded out the people who weren't serious. The leadership is very close to one another, very spiritually motivated. I think the church will be just fine without me."

Her daughter, Liza Arulampalam, an American Baptist pastor currently home with her infant twins, was one of the ones to sign on. She also has a toddler and has adopted a young child from Congo, who has yet to live with the family.

"My mom raised me to straddle the line between progressive social values and a solid evangelical Christian faith, so there was no other church that would really fit me. My husband and I both grew up with the values of the Evangelical/Pentecostal sub-culture: daily time with God, emphasis on scripture, contemporary Christian music, small group Bible study, etc. But we also both are unabashedly liberal and progressive on issues of gender, sexual orientation, etc. My best friends are gay, Muslim and Hindu. I couldn't go to a church where they would not feel welcomed, and Riverfront Family Church is literally the most welcoming community I have ever been a part of. There is no other church that we know of in this are that combines a serious evangelical faith with a more inclusive worldview," she said.

'Worse and worse, faster and faster'

Butler's symptons, which started with an occasional trip, worsened, and when she started looking for a diagnosis doctors thought it might be a problem with her spine. In April 2014, her father pushed her to go to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn. By then, she was walking with a cane. That testing was inconclusive. It was

thought that perhaps she had PLS, a more benign disease.

She returned to the Mayo Clinic in February 2015.

"It got worse and worse, faster and faster," Butler said.

This time, there was no question. She told her congregation about her illness during a belated Ash Wednesday service. "It was my first Sunday back with my church family. They all heard the bad news together. I remember sitting there, we all had ashes on our foreheads. We had five minutes of silence. Everyone was crying and talking about how the church has changed their lives," Butler said, tearing up at the memory. "I cry a lot now. You cry more with ALS. Things are so much more profound now. There was so much love in the room and faith that everything will be OK."

Of course, she knows that her decline is inevitable.

"I'm able to do less and less each week. Every time I ask how long I have, they won't answer. It's annoying. I've lost 3 to 4 percent of my lung capacity every month. I'll probably die next year summer or fall unless I get a tracheotomy. Stephen Hawking got a tracheotomy. You can live a normal lifespan. It's the diaphragm that kills you with ALS," she explained. "Usually, your eyes don't go, so you can still use your eyes."

She's already recorded her voice.

"It's about 10 percent of the normal range of communication. You can't tell a big, juicy story," she said.

She is unsure whether she'll get the tracheotomy.

"Someday, I'll make that decision. I don't know what I'll do. You can go on the trach, and if you don't like it, they unplug it and you'll die. I'm hoping God gives me guidance at that point."

She is most worried about her family.

"I think I'm lucky I had a very strong faith going into it. I feel pretty confident there's an afterlife. Even if I have to suffer, God will help me get through it. I'm really sad for my husband and daughters. I don't know why my husband fell head over heels in love with me. He's been so faithful and devoted. We've only been with each other our whole lives. It's heartbreaking and horrible for him," she said. "The church will go on; I will go on. It's a deep wound on my husband and daughters."

She has found comfort in unexpected places. Shortly after being diagnosed, she was attending a seminar in Florida.

"I was very upset about my daughters not having a mother," she said.

She needed to sit on a bench, a caregiver bringing food, while different people would come and chat for a few minutes.

"It was kind of fun for an introvert," she remembered.

Most of the conversations were superficial, but when one woman sat down, Butler opened up.

"I said 'I have ALS,' and started to cry," she said. The woman was Reverend Mother Sue Price. "She looked like a trailer park lady but a 'mother' is a big poohbah in the Episcopal Church. She said that there would be other women in the church when my daughters needed someone, people would be there."

As Butler's health has faltered, the church has been gaining momentum.

"My daughter said, 'The less you do, the better the church gets,'" she said with a chuckle. "We had eight new families join this past month. We're booming financially and spiritually. The church is doing really, really well."

Worshippers come from a variety of backgrounds.

WNPR radio host Colin McEnroe learned about Butler years ago.

"She had listened a lot, I think, to my old show on WTIC while driving back and forth to Yale Divinity School and concluded that I was the sort of person who would be interested in what she was trying to do. I'm embarrassed to say that I kept shoving that idea to a far distant back burner. I mean, there was something intriguing about it, but I was barraged with all kinds of competing material, so I never went to check out the church and I never invited her to be on WTIC. And then I discovered she had ALS. And something went 'ding' inside me. This was an important story to tell," said McEnroe, who invited her to do a one-hour on-air interview. "But then it seemed important to go to her services to prepare for the interview."

He went twice before the interview.

"And then I kept going. I'm still there," McEnroe said. "What struck me was, as I'm sure everyone says, her sheer radiance but also how damn funny she is. She's a natural comedian. Christianity is not known for its comic side and neither is ALS. But she makes us laugh all the time. Since then, she's had a profound effect on me. There's nobody like her. I certainly don't have her faith, but she makes the church a very safe space in which to ask important questions and explore and grow. Meanwhile, she's on the ultimate adventure. That's how she treats it. She's deeply sad, of course, and often frustrated. But there's some other level at which she's very engaged with the

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ride she's on. So watching her prepare for the ascent is pretty damn inspiring."

Caregivers, 24/7

Butler said her faith has gotten deeper, even as she has to stop giving sermons as her speech worsens.

"It sounds kind of cheesy, but I believe in Jesus more and more," she said. "I have real certainty that all this spiritual stuff I've been teaching is true. I think my faith has gotten stronger because of it."

She also has been struck by how thoughtful people have been, sending cards and prayer shawls.

"I think I'm more optimistic about humanity," she said. "Most people are very kind. When you need other people, you see how kind and generous people are. There are a lot of good people out there."

That doesn't mean life is easy. She and her husband had to move from their home in Glastonbury to one in Marlborough. They had four architects look at their house to see if it could be retrofit but because it is built on a slope, it wasn't possible.

She needs help with everything from brushing her teeth to washing her face. Right now, she can move a joy stick a little with one finger, and move a stick with her head that allows her to email, write and use Facebook.

"I'm still able to eat. Eventually, I will have to go on a feeding tube. They prefer to do it now, when my breathing is stronger," Butler said. "It is humbling. People literally have to wipe your butt, shower you, blow your nose. My caregivers have to do everything like I'm a giant baby."

And there's a great cost to this.

"We're very blessed, and it's straining us financially. They call it the bankruptcy disease. You have to have constant caregivers, 24/7. It's very difficult for families to cope with ALS," Butler said.

"My faith has helped me stay strong, my belief that death is not the end and that I will see my mom again for eternity. Her own resilience, positivity and peace with death has also helped lessen some of the pain that comes with watching someone you love go through a terrible illness. But honestly I don't always stay strong," Arulampalam said. "It's been a really difficult year. We've had adoption struggles with our two adopted children, a surprise twin pregnancy and four kids all under the age of 3. To do all of this without my mom being able to physically help me while also grieving her illness has been really difficult. I don't want readers to put our family up on a pedestal because ALS really sucks. It's been awful for all of us. My husband and his family have been incredibly supportive. My mother-in-law came from California to live with us and help out for two months when the twins were born. My sister, dad and our extended family also support and lean on each other. My mom always says that her prayer for us is that God will send 'angels' who can do the motherly things that she isn't able to do after she's gone, and I have seen that already this year in our family. Her caregivers have been angels, my friends and in-laws have been angels, and my sister and I have gotten closer and become angels to each other."

Arulampalam said that many words come to mind when describing her mother: "teacher, eternal optimist, driven, independent, entrepreneurial, highly organized, great storyteller, very strong faith and principled."

"My mom is a teacher at heart and has made it her life's work to point people towards God. This was true in the way she mothered us and in what she has done with the church. She is far from perfect, but she has always tried to listen to God and act on this prompting to the end. If she could tell you one thing it would probably be: Listen to what God is saying and then do something about it," she said.

In her new home, Butler said the walls in her bedroom were blank and she wants something inspirational to look at.

"Obviously, someday I'll die in that bedroom," she said.

The first quote she's chosen for the wall is from Hebrews 12: "Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."

"Right now, that's the one. God has a race marked out for us," Butler said. "Instead of being depressed or giving up, God will give us the energy we need one day at a time." **GL**

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Helping the last of the World War II vets

For Nick Hurley, history is alive and well

by Nancy Thompson
Editor

Nick Hurley has been fascinated by the military and by history since he was a young boy. He has spent years not only studying it, but living it as well.

Today, the Glastonbury native holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in history and a commission in the Army National Guard.

He also works at the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center at UConn and volunteers at the New England Air Museum in Windsor Locks.

And, in what free time he has left, Hurley volunteers with a group that honors World War II veterans by flying them to Washington, D.C., where they visit the National World War II Memorial and other sites.

Hurley's love of history dates back to the days when he and his friends would play soldier in their yards and camp out in the nearby woods. His father and both grandfathers had served in the military, although he said none of them pressured him to follow that path.

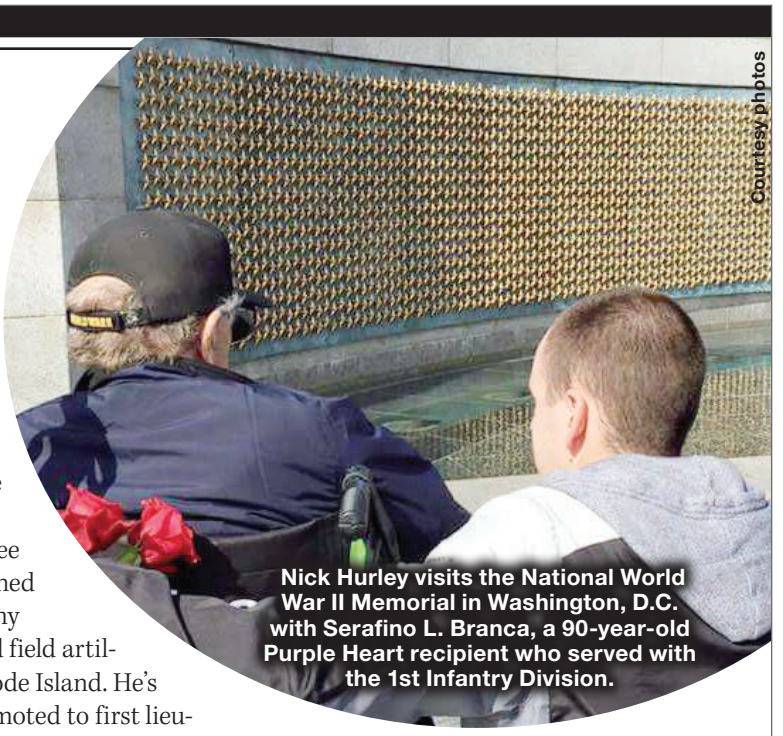
"As a kid I watched all the black-and-white World War II movies and read all the books in the library that hadn't been taken out since 1975," he said. "The more I read, the more interested I became. That's where my love of history and all things military came from."

As a sophomore at Glastonbury High School, Hurley joined a Navy Junior ROTC program in Plainville since there was none locally. "I've been in a uniform of some kind since I was 15," he said.

After graduating from high school in 2009, he enrolled at UConn, where he majored in history, wrote an undergraduate thesis about World War II for the university's honors program, and joined the Army ROTC.

"I joined the National Guard in 2010," he said. "I drilled with a unit and the Army paid for my schooling."

He said he knew before his senior year that he wanted to stay at UConn and get a master's degree in history. He completed the program at the end of 2015 after three semesters, during which he studied modern European history and completed a major research project on World War I. Toward the end of his graduate studies, he wrote a piece about the War of 1812 that he's hoping to have published.



Courtesy photos

Nick Hurley visits the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. with Serafino L. Branca, a 90-year-old Purple Heart recipient who served with the 1st Infantry Division.

Hurley was commissioned when he received his bachelor's degree in 2013 and signed on with an Army National Guard field artillery unit in Rhode Island. He's since been promoted to first lieutenant and is planning to say with the National Guard for a few more years.

This summer, he's planning to travel to Germany to interview relatives and collect oral histories about life during the Second World War.

Honoring the heroes

Hurley's passion, and an activity that combines his love of history and his interest in World War II and the military in general, is his volunteer work as a guardian with Honor Flight New England, a non-profit organization based in New Hampshire.

Honor Flight New England, founded in 2009, provides free air transportation to Washington, D.C., so World War II veterans and terminally ill veterans from any conflict can visit the National World War II Memorial on the National Mall and

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other military sites. The memorial opened in 2004, when many of the World War II veterans were too old to get there on their own.

The program is open to veterans from throughout New England, but Hurley said fewer vets from this area apply simply because it is not as well known in southern New England. To date, about 1,500 veterans have taken part in 40 flights.

Hurley said he learned about the program through a friend's LinkedIn post, went to the group's website and filled out an application to become a guardian. He later underwent training to learn how to care for the veterans, many of whom use wheelchairs or oxygen tanks or have other physical challenges.

He went on his first flight last summer as a guardian for Serafino L. Branca, a 90-year-old Purple Heart recipient from Massachusetts. Guardians are assigned to veterans who don't have a family member – usually a son or daughter or grandchild – or someone else who can accompany them on the trip. Veterans fly for free; guardians pay their own way.

His day started before dawn in a motel near Manchester, New Hampshire. He met Branca at a nearby firehouse during a meet-and-greet session before taking a school bus to the Manchester airport.

"Half the Manchester Police Department was there," Hurley said. "There were police vehicles and Patriot Riders serving as a motorcycle honor guard. We had a half-mile-long escort right to the terminal." A total of 120 people boarded the commercial flight, including 60 veterans, 60 guardians and 15 to 20 support people.

When the veterans, ranging in age from 88 to 98, entered the airport, they found it full of well-wishers, flags and banners, and music by the Manchester Police Department's bagpipe unit.

"The vets loved it," he said. "They had no idea it would happen."

They flew to Baltimore and were greeted with more military pomp and circumstance before boarding coach buses escorted by a motorcycle officer from the U.S. Capitol Police.

Their first stop was the National World War II Memorial with its stone pillars and reflecting pool. "It's a really moving, powerful memorial," Hurley said. "I was aware it would mean different things to different vets. There was a lot of emotion. Some of them hadn't talked about the war since they got back. My guy wanted to walk a little bit. He's 90, very sharp, very nice and talkative, but a little unsteady on his feet."

He said many family members who have heard about Honor Flight think their veteran is too old to go. That's usually not the case. "The program was set up for that," Hurley said.

The bus proceeded to the Korean War Memorial, the Navy Memorial, the Air Force Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery, where the veterans were seated in a place of honor during the changing of the guard ceremony. They returned to Baltimore for a sit-down dinner before flying back to Manchester.

"It was a long day, but it was worth it," Hurley said, calling the program "a race against time" because about 500 World War II veterans die every day.

Joe Byron, founder of Honor Flight New England, praised Hurley for his dedication and his work in a variety of roles.

"Nick is available to do whatever we need, from educational outreach, being a guardian or conducting fundraisers," Byron said. "He is truly dedicated to Honor Flight New England and the World War II heroes and is extremely knowledgeable about the history of World War II." **GL**

To learn more about Honor Flight New England, visit honorflightnewengland.org, call Byron at 603-518-5368, or send an email to honorflightnewengland@gmail.com.

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March calendar

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

1 Town plan and zoning commission, 7 p.m., town hall council chambers, 2155 Main St. glastonbury-ct.gov.

2 Book discussion, "The Aviator's Wife," 7 to 8 p.m., Welles-Turner Memorial Library, 2407 Main St., $, 860-652-7720 or wtmlib.com. Registration is not necessary.

6 Kasha Breau and the Wild Notes in concert, 2 p.m., Friends Room, Welles-Turner Memorial Library, 2407 Main St. No charge. Part of the Ella Waters Music Series. wtmlib.com

8 Town council, 7 p.m., town hall council chambers, 2155 Main St. 860-652-7710 or glastonbury-ct.gov.

10 Planetarium show: "We are Aliens," 6 p.m., Glastonbury East Hartford Magnet School planetarium, 95 Oak St. Tickets available at www.glastonburyplanetarium.org for $4.25. For more information, email Planetarium@Glastonburyus.org or call 860-652-4910, ext. 364.

Art in the Abbey, artists social 4 to 7 p.m., paint workshop with Jim Grabowski, 7 to 9 p.m. St. James Episcopal Church, 2584 Main St. $10 for social, $50 for paint workshop. Pre-registration required for the workshop. Stjamesglastonbury.org.

11 Planetarium show with live music: Renaissance to Rock, 7:30 p.m., Glastonbury East Hartford Magnet School planetarium, 95 Oak St. Tickets available at www.glastonburyplanetarium.org for $10. For more information, email Planetarium@Glastonburyus.org or call 860-652-4910, ext. 364.

Guided bird walk, 8:30 a.m., CT Audubon Society Center, 1361 Main St. $5 members, $10 non-members, payable at the door. 860-633-8402 or ctaudubon.org.

12 Children's planetarium show: "Cocomong – A Space Adventure," 2:30 p.m., Glastonbury East Hartford Magnet School planetarium, 95 Oak St. Tickets available at www.glastonburyplanetarium.org for $4.25. For more information, email Planetarium@Glastonburyus.org or call 860-652-4910, ext. 364.

Art and Family Day, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., St. James Episcopal Church, 2584 Main St. $5 includes one art project per child; additional projects available for an added fee. Stjamesglastonbury.org.

13 Maple Sugar Madness, 1 to 4 p.m., Welles-Shipman-Ward House, 972 Main St. $5. General parking is available at St. Augustine Church, 55 Hopewell St. Handicapped parking on site. 860-633-6890 or hsgct.org. Snow date March 20.

14 Board of education, 7:30 p.m., town hall council chambers, 2155 Main St. 860-652-7961 or glastonburyus.org.

15 Town plan and zoning commission, 7 p.m., town hall council chambers, 2155 Main St. glastonbury-ct.gov.

"Keeping Up With Your Grandkids: Microsoft Excel II Advanced Formatting, 3 to 5 p.m., Riverfront Community Center Computer Lab, 300 Welles St. Reservations required. 860-652-7720 or wtmlib.com

16 Author Mark Granato discusses "Out of Reach: The Day Hartford Hospital Burned," 6:30 p.m., Welles-Turner Memorial Library, 2407 Main St. Registration requested. 860-652-7720 or wtmlib.com.

17 Coloring Club for Adults, 2 to 3:30 p.m., Friends room, Welles-Turner Memorial Library, 2407 Main St. Registration required by calling 860-652-7720 or visiting wtmlib.com.

The Kerry Boys in concert, 6:30 p.m., Friends Room, Welles-Turner Memorial Library, 2407 Main St. No charge. Part of the Ella Waters Music Series. wtmlib.com

19 Welsh Society of Western New England genealogy group, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Visitors welcome. Bring a Welsh family tree and a lunch dish to share. Reserve a spot by emailing WelshWNE@gmail.com. Directions will be forwarded at that time.

20 Nancy Tucker in concert, 2 p.m., CT Audubon Society Center, 1361 Main St. $10 members with a $30 maximum for a family, $14 non-members with a $40 maximum for a family. Children younger than 12 are half price. 860-633-8402 or ctaudubon.org.

22 Town council, 7 p.m., town hall council chambers, 2155 Main St. 860-652-7710 or glastonbury-ct.gov.

Land Heritage Coalition annual meeting, 7 p.m., South Glastonbury Public Library with a presentation about sustainable methods of lawn care.

23 Black Bears in Connecticut, 6:30 p.m., Welles-Turner Memorial Library, 2407 Main St. Registration requested. 860-652-7720 or wtmlib.com.

24 Planetarium show: "We are Aliens," 6 p.m., Glastonbury East Hartford Magnet School planetarium, 95 Oak St. Tickets available at www.glastonburyplanetarium.org for $4.25. For more information, email Planetarium@Glastonburyus.org or call 860-652-4910, ext. 364.

28 Board of education, 7:30 p.m., town hall council chambers, 2155 Main St. 860-652-7961 or glastonburyus.org.

Author Janet Barrett discusses "They Called Her Reckless," Welles-Turner Memorial Library, 2407 Main St. Registration requested. 860-652-7720 or wtmlib.com.

29 Coloring Club for Adults, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., Friends room, Welles-Turner Memorial Library, 2407 Main St. Registration required by calling 860-652-7720 or visiting wtmlib.com.

Courtesy photo

Dr. Darren S. Tishler specializes in minimally invasive weight loss surgery.

Bariatric surgeon finds new ways to help patients regain health

Tischler is intrigued by minimally invasive surgeries

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Darren S. Tishler serves as the director of metabolic and bariatric surgery at Hartford Hospital and for Hartford Healthcare, and associate professor of surgery at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine. He received his medical education from The Chicago Medical School, and completed his fellowship in minimally invasive and bariatric surgery at the University of Alabama-Birmingham.

He has studied the response of medical conditions in morbidly obese people, various surgical treatment options, the role of robotics in bariatric surgery, the study of nutritional abnormalities after weight loss surgery, and the long-term surgical management of the post-bariatric surgery patient. Tishler, who is a member of the American College of Surgeons, the American Society for Metabolic & Bariatric Surgery

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and the Society of American Gastrointestinal Endoscopic Surgeon, has an office on Western Boulevard. He agreed to answer some questions from Glastonbury LIFE.

Q. What first sparked your interest in weight loss surgery?

A. When I first went into my surgery residency, I never thought about doing weight loss surgery. When I originally did my surgery training, I never thought I'd go into a career in weight loss surgery. When I started interviewing as a fellow in surgery, surgeons were just starting to do complex surgeries using minimally invasive procedures. By treating obesity through surgery, we are able to cure quite a few complex medical problems. It kind of captivated me at that point.

I did my fellowship in minimally invasive surgery and learned a variety of different procedures. I did gravitate toward more complicated weight loss surgery. I really enjoyed being able to work with patients who have a really a complex disease and be able to treat a variety of medical problems associated with obesity.

Q. How have you seen this field progress?

A. The most important thing that has progressed in the field of bariatric surgery is that obesity is widely recognized as a disease today. In the past, weight loss surgery was something that was kept quiet; it wasn't widely recognized. Today, the severity of obesity is recognized. It can be effectively treated and in many cases, cured.

The other part that's been a major development in the treatment of obesity through bariatric surgery has been the influx of technology and minimally invasive techniques, complex surgeries through very safe procedures that allow for a very quick recovery for patients.

Q. Why is this an important medical field?

A. Obesity today is, aside from cigarette smoking, one of the leading causes of preventable death in the United States. Additionally, it is an extremely costly medical problem. It's a devastating medical problem, and it's a problem that prevents people from really enjoying, in many cases, a really high quality of life.

Q. Tell me about the new intragastric balloon procedure.

A. Until recently, all of the procedures we do for obesity were procedures that were invasive procedures. They involved doing surgery, they involved a stay in the hospital. They were for all intents and purposes irreversible procedures or procedures that required another surgery to remove, such as the adjustable gastric band, which would require another surgery to remove.

[The intragastric balloon] is really the first major new development from a truly medical device standpoints we've seen in bariatric surgery in many years. We place the balloon endoscopically during a very quick procedure down through the mouth into the stomach. Once the balloon is in the stomach, we can inflate the balloon and the balloon serves to make somebody feel full, satisfied and less hungry. It's a silicone balloon filled with saline or salt water. When the balloon is in the stomach, we leave it in there for six months. It's a temporary procedure.

While the balloon's in the stomach, there are a few phases. In the first phase, people have to adapt for a few days. It's a totally different, new sensation for patients to feel full all the time. Some patients may have a little nausea; they may feel uncomfortable but it's usually short-lived. The second phase is once somebody has adapted. We work with this tool to eat a healthy diet and exercise in order to maximize the weight loss over the next roughly six months. In a program like ours, they work with a nutritionist, they work on all kinds of diet modifications overall. It's not to be on a special diet per se.

The final phase is right before the balloon is removed and after it's removed for the next six months, making sure the patients have the strategy in place to maintain the

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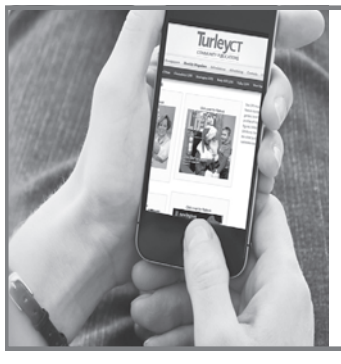

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weight loss through healthy lifestyle changes.

Q. What are some trends that you notice around weight loss surgery?

A. In general for weight loss surgery, the general trend is only a small percentage of people who would benefit are seeking treatment of weight loss surgery today. In many cases, there can be a lack of access of care for weight loss surgery. Many insurance companies today exclude coverage for bariatric weight loss surgery. At the same time, I don't want to imply there's no coverage, [but] many policies have exclusions to coverage. It's actually something from a national standpoint we're working to correct the inequalities. ... I sit on a national committee, an access to care committee. We're working to change these unfair and even discriminatory policies.

Q. What's the barometer of success for weight loss surgery patients?

A. One of the first things people think about when you judge how people do with weight loss surgery is how much weight they lose. That couldn't be further from the truth. You want to look at quality of the life. If we're able to improve somebody's mobility, treat somebody's diabetes, their high blood pressure, their cholesterol, help them with their joint pain. In many cases, patients will live longer. We're able to reduce the risk of heart attack, stroke and blood clots significantly in these patients.

We prefer to refer to it as metabolic surgery [which] refers to the medical problems that go along with obesity. To really look at the success of [the surgery], you have to look at why obesity causes medical problems. ... If you can modify the major risk factors of early cardiac diseases, we're going to help patients to live longer.

I personally believe that really the essence of bariatric surgery is being able to improve mobility. If we can help somebody move better, we're going to help just about everything with their quality of life.

Q. What's the biggest misconception about weight loss surgery?

A. I think the biggest misconception is that bariatric surgery is either cheating to get weight loss or it's the easy way out. And I think a lot of patient are discouraged by family and friends because of that. What bariatric surgery does is give them the proper tools for weight loss and quality of life.

Q. What's on the horizon that excites you?

A. Our research in our program in Hartford is really focused on looking at ways that we can predict not only how well will someone do on weight loss surgery but what is the best way to treat somebody's obesity and their various medical problems. Some of our research involves doing a special MRI study before and after surgery that show the actual changes that occur in the brain at a year out from weight loss surgery. Additionally, we've done some genetic studies to look at the genetic effects at patient responses to weight loss surgery, and we're even looking at areas as unique as how somebody perceives taste before and after weight loss surgery. These are all ongoing studies in the program right now. We're going to be able to have really specialized tools and really be able to target the treatment based on the diseases of the individual patient.

Q. Who might be a candidate for weight loss surgery?

A. In general a weight loss surgery is indicated when there's a body mass index of 35 and above, which typically is somewhere is 50 and 100 pounds overweight. However, for the intragastric balloon procedure, the new FDA approval for that is a BMI of 30 and above, which might be someone who is 35 pounds or so overweight. **GL**

To learn more information about Hartford Hospital's surgical weight loss program, visit harthosp.org/obesitysurgery/default.aspx.

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Events spotlight

Maple Sugar Madness

March 13, 1 to 4 p.m.
Welles-Shipman-Ward House, 972 Main St.
860-633-6890 or hsgct.org

Sap starts running in March, and the Historical Society of Glastonbury celebrates that each year. This year's event will include a demonstration of maple syrup being made from the sap of maple trees on the property of the Welles-Shipman-Ward House along with tours of the house and its barns and an opportunity for guests to sample last year's maple syrup over pancakes made by costumed docents on the open fire of the house's huge fireplace. General parking is available at St. Augustine Church, 55 Hopewell St., and handicapped parking is available on site. In case of snow, the event will be postponed to March 20. There is a $5 charge for admission.

The Kerry Boys in concert

March 17, 6:30 p.m.
Friends Room, Welles-Turner Memorial Library, 2407 Main St.
friendswtmlib.org

The Kerry Boys, among the state's most popular Irish balladeers, will perform traditional Irish music on St. Patrick's Day with their signature vocal harmonies and high-energy instrumentation. The concert is sponsored by the Friends of the Welles-Turner Memorial Library as part of the Ella Waters Music Series.

Nancy Tucker in concert

March 20, 2 p.m.
CT Audubon Society Center, 1361 Main St.
860-633-8402 or ctaudubon.org

Guests are invited to bring the entire family to this concert by Nancy Tucker, known for her "squeaky clean" comedy, guitar instrumentals and moving songs. Admission is $10 for society members, with a $30 maximum for a family and $14 for non-members with a $40 family maximum. Children younger than 12 are half price.

Art in the Abbey

March 10, 4 to 9 p.m., March 11, 5 to 9 p.m. and March 12, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
St. James Church, 2584 Main St.
Stjamesglastonbury.org

St. James Episcopal Church's annual "Art in the Abbey" event has been expanded this year to include an artists' social, at $10 per person, and a paint workshop, at $50 per person, on Thursday. The fundraising gala on Friday, at $20 per person, will offer an opportunity to see and buy several kinds of art. Art and Family Day on Saturday, $5 per person, will feature art projects for children and a last opportunity to buy art, jewelry and remaining gift baskets. **GL**

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Celebrating 50 years as an artist

After early rejection, Christopher Gurshin flourishes

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Photo by Mara Dresner

Christopher Gurshin paints in a studio in a barn on his property in South Glastonbury.

Christopher Gurshin was rejected from art school – three times. That hasn't kept him from having a successful career as an artist. He's been working for 50 years and has no plans of stopping.

Gurshin always enjoyed art, starting from elementary school in Marblehead, Mass., where he grew up. He fondly remembers his elementary school classes, where he worked on everything from drawing to papier maché.

"I had a teacher who came in, I think it was once a week, and teach different things. Later on, it was once every two weeks, and later on, it was once a month. I was very disappointed. And then there was nothing until middle school," he recalled. "It's not that I learned a lot but I always enjoyed doing it."

In high school, he had to make a choice about which career path to follow.

"I thought I'd like to be a doctor so you take the college course. I hated the college course!" he said. "When you're first in ninth grade, if you're going to major in art, you're supposed to major in art that year. In the 10th grade, I said I wanted to change [majors]."

Toward the end of his senior year, he joined the Marine Corps Reserve, and two weeks after graduation, he was at Parris Island. His plan was to serve and then "go on to art school and do what I want in life. I got out of that and tried to get into art school three times. I was rejected three times," Gurshin said.

Undeterred, he went took night classes at the art guild in Marblehead. One night, artist Nathan Kredenser from Brookline, Mass., a friend of the instructor, stopped in.

"He was a big artist in Boston," Gurshin said of the meeting in 1965. "It so happens the model didn't show up so Mr. Kredenser sat in for an hour or so when I got to meet him."

Kredenser was known for his mural paintings, including those at the Papa Gino's restaurants, and Gurshin ended up working with him off and on for two decades.

"I remembered several years ago on my first visit to Bishop's Corner [in West Hartford], there was a Papa Gino's. I saw one of the many murals, and I probably did the work on the skies and clouds," Gurshin said.

He said meeting Kredenser "was just a fluke," adding, "A lot of things through life, all the connections seemed to go the right way."

He also did his own work, including murals, in a variety of mediums.

"Of more significance of who I am today developed in 1975 only because that's when I discovered Rufus Porter," said Gurshin, who has restored a couple of Porter's paintings in Merrimack. "He is a very famous entrepreneur in his own right. He started so many things that people today try to imitate. That was the basis of my early style of developing paintings using stenciling and painting combinations. From that I kept on going. I just did what I like to do and I'm happy that others were giving me money for what I liked to do, and I couldn't believe it."

Through time, his style evolved.

"My early work was a lot simpler," he said. "It's a simplistic style of using stenciling, my knowledge of traditional painting, with a primitive touch. I'm trying to hold on to the primitive style.

"That's the secret, not to get

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Courtesy photos

Left: Residents will recognize local landmarks in Christopher Gurshin's painting, "Glastonbury." **Middle:** Gurshin's "Marblehead Memories Forever" features a variety of items that have meaning to the artist. **Right:** Gurshin often creates worlds such as the one envisioned in "Country Village."

overly done," he added.

He's been quite prolific, producing paintings, illustrations, drawings, tins, collectibles and calendars. He has a shop on his property in South Glastonbury that is open to the public by appointment. He also writes for "A Primitive Place" magazine, which is on sale at Barnes & Noble and Joanne Fabrics.

Through the years, he has gained both critical and commercial success.

"I have been friends with Chris for over 30 years, having first met him in Essex, Mass., where he had a studio and I managed a fine arts gallery specializing in 19th and early 20th century New England art," said Ginger Druchyk of Ginger Druchyk Art Advisory in Old Lyme, who said his mural work provides enough material for an article of its own. "While we have gone our separate ways, geographically speaking, we managed to catch up from time to time, and most recently renewed our friendship when he and his wife moved to Glastonbury. Over the years, Chris's contemporary folk art style has matured and become more refined, while its essence has always stayed true to the spirit and honesty of the New England Yankee characters that populate all of his work, including his paintings, sculpture, furniture and extensive mural commissions."

She continued, "This is where Chris' passion for his art has produced site-specific, large-scale magnificent works of New England whimsy and traditional folk art design. Often, he is asked by clients to incorporate local scenes and some of their favorite subjects into a painting that measures several feet high and several yards wide. With his characteristic adventurist spirit, Chris accepts these daunting projects with anticipation and excitement at the prospect of sharing his imagination and love of traditional folk lore and design. Now, wherever I see new work by Chris, they

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are immediately recognizable by his signature style."

His work has become so well known that he even was approached by one of the institutions that had rejected him decades earlier.

"The irony is that in 1991, what happened? The Museum of Fine Arts in Boston put on an exhibit called 'American Folk' for their collection of folk art. Well, who do they get in touch with to represent contemporary folk art in their gift shop? Me! Who they had rejected! I told them a little story," Gurshin said with a chuckle.

The museum ordered a special series of stencil-type paintings, which sold out, and also took some items from his gallery to sell.

"I felt good," he said. "But the moral of the story and the important part of the story is to believe in yourself."

Gurshin sometimes creates worlds that he imagines; other times, he paints well-known scenes, including some in town. When he does a larger work, he often sketches it out on the reverse side before painting.

"But sometimes once you get into a painting, one things leads to another. You fall into it as you're doing it. A lot of times, you don't know what's going to happen," he said.

One detailed painting is entitled "Marblehead Memories Forever."

"It has all the elements that are important to me," Gurshin said, including Abbot Hall, Crocker Park, hollyhocks, Marblehead pottery and the USS Constitution coming into the harbor.

Some of Gurshin's designs have been made into needlepoint kits.

One of his favorite subjects is the Wayside Inn, where he married his wife, Janice,

who was living in Newington at the time and used to visit Newburyport, Mass., where she'd stop into a gallery.

"I spotted his painting the first time I went. I said, 'Oh my God, I love that.' I never met him for 15 years. He was my favorite artist. I'd go to that shop every summer," she said.

Gurshin produced a video on how to paint, which Janice ordered. As a matter of course, he called everyone who purchased the video to see how they had done with it. The day Gurshin called her, she was out of town, visiting her mother.

"I could not believe it. Christopher was a household name. My children called me at my mother's, and said, 'Guess what! Christopher Gurshin called," she said.

When Gurshin was asked to doing a painting for Old Sturbridge Village, he invited Janice to meet him there. She was so in awe that she couldn't drink her iced tea.

"I just really enjoyed his work. To finally meet the artist I loved so much, I kept trying to sip it and it wouldn't go down," she remembered fondly.

"Things all went from there," Gurshin said, adding that he never expected to live in Connecticut."

Since Janice was still working at the time, he moved to Newington. After a couple of years, they moved to Union.

When travelling through Glastonbury, they'd play a little game.

"We used to travel on this road and every time, we'd go by this road, we'd pick out different houses [where we'd like to live]," Janice said.

When their home became available, they knew it was right for them.

"We thought we could do something with the barn," Gurshin said.

They're been happy with the move.

"From the day we moved here, the Chamber of Commerce has been so welcoming," Janice said.

In addition to serving as a shop, Gurshin uses the upstairs of the barn as his studio. He said he's never sure what he's going to work on each day.

"I never know, unless I have a commission or something to do, it's what I feel like doing. Then I just play around with what I want to do, whether it's making a house or painting a piece of furniture. I'm doing whatever I want. I'm a spoiled kid," he said with a laugh.

He has slowed down a little as he passed five decades of work.

"I don't work as late as I used to, that's for sure. I used to work a lot until 11, 12 o'clock at night, but I don't do that now," he said.

A lot happens internally before he puts brush to paper.

"There's a big turmoil in your head all the time, thinking. It's like a big storm. It's hard for me to relax," Gurshin said. "It's the pleasure of solving the challenge of what I want to put together for a painting, of producing what's in your mind and seeing it in reality." GL

Learn more at christophergurshin.com.

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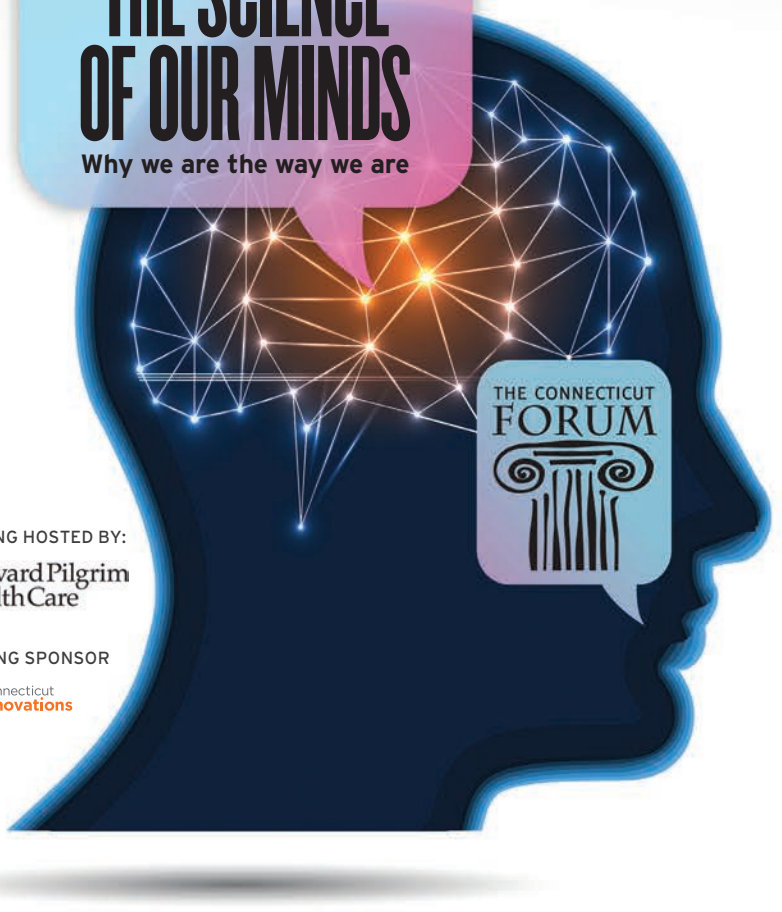

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LIVING *Your Best* LIFE

Nancy Thompson photo

Diana Gondek has been a country music fan for decades, dating back to the days of 78 rpm records. Her collection includes these by country legend Hank Williams.

Staying busy, staying young

Diana Gondek enjoys her hobbies, her friends and her family

by Nancy Thompson
Editor

Forget Ponce de Leon and his so-called fountain of youth. Diana Gondek has found her own ways to stay young.

"All the stuff I've done and still do has kept me young," the youthful septuagenarian said.

And when she refers to "all the stuff," she's not kidding.

She travels with her daughter, enjoys her children, grandchildren and great-grandchild, plays poker once and bingo twice every week, serves on the board of the local chapter of the AARP and continues to work on her bucket list.

She said she's loved music all her life, and has been a huge fan of country music and country artists since she was 13.

"It's not just country," she said. "I like blues and jazz and other styles." The exception? Elvis Presley. "I don't like Elvis," she said. "Never did."

Gondek's interest in hearing – and often meeting – country music stars was piqued when she saw Johnnie Ray, a popular singer, songwriter and pianist in the 1950s whose style of jazz and blues is considered by many to be a precursor of rock and roll, at G. Fox & Company.

In the late 1970s she went to the Oakdale Theater in Wallingford to see Tom Jones, a Welsh singer who was immensely popular in the 1960s with songs such as "What's new, Pussycat?" and "She's a Lady." She found herself sitting in the front row when a man invited her to meet the singer after the concert. "He gave me directions to a place to go, and when I rang the doorbell, Tom Jones opened the door," she said.

Gondek's luck with celebrities has continued. She was one of several hundred fans who signed up to meet country star Vince Gill after a

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show and was one of 10 chosen. His personalized, signed photograph has a place of honor in her living room.

Gondek has passed her love of country music to at least two of her children, including her oldest daughter, Linda, who lives in Florida.

"She wasn't wild about country music, but she went to a concert and now she loves it," she said. They've travelled together to Nashville, but skipped Presley's Graceland.

Over the years, Gondek has met several other country music stars, including these: Phil Vassar, a country music singer/songwriter who has written songs for some of the top country singers, including Tim McGraw, Jo Dee Messina and Alan Jackson; singer and songwriter Randy Hauser; Darius Rucker, the lead singer for Hootie & the Blowfish; and Kellie Pickler, who gained fame after finishing sixth on American Idol several years ago.

Gondek described Rucker as "the nicest guy," and said she's met Pickler several times. "She's so southern," she said.

One of her close friends in the business is Danny Perdieu, whom she met at a Phil Vassar show at Mohegan Sun and who is the tour manager for Pickler and has worked with several other artists. "He's my kids' age," she said with a smile.

Gondek has checked off many items on her bucket list, but she'd still like to meet actor Richard Gere.

Diana Gondek has a collection of signed celebrity photos including this one, from country music star Vince Gill.

Nancy Thompson photo

"Diana clearly stays active and connected to family and friends, which all of the research on aging recommends that folks do. I think she is a wise and pragmatic person as well, a great combination."

– Patti White, director of senior services

Glastonbury to Florida and back

Gondek, who was part of Glastonbury High School's first graduating class in its Hubbard Street location, has lived in Glastonbury all her life except 17 years in Florida when she and her husband retired in 1985.

Before that, the couple owned a pet shop in Fox Run Mall that was known for its welcoming atmosphere and for Lolita, the shop's talking parrot. "She was very popular," Gondek said, adding that the shop sold birds, fish and small animals.

She and her husband sold the shop and retired to New Port Richie, where she recalled seeing the space shuttle Challenger explosion shortly after lift-off from Kennedy Space Center 30 years ago. Her husband died in 2001, and she returned to Glastonbury the following year.

"It's been a very fun 13 years," Gondek said of life since her return. She gets together with three or four other women for a weekly poker game that's more for fun than money. "We buy $2 worth of chips, and when we run out we buy more," she said. She also plays bingo at St. Paul's in town and at the Army & Navy Club in Manchester.

She enjoys taking car trips with her daughter Karen, who lives in the area. "She loves to drive and I love to ride," Gondek said.

She's a member of the board of directors for the local AARP chapter and takes part in activities at the Riverfront Community Center, where she has many friends, including Angela Marie Russo, president of the town's AARP chapter, and Patti White, the town's supervisor of senior services.

"I have been impressed with Diana's genuine warmth and her knowledge of country music and its artists," said Russo, who also plays poker and bingo with Gondek. "She speaks of them as though they were family."

"She is such a joyful person, who embodies a zest for living with a bit of a mischievous side to her," White said. "I loved her stories about finding and meeting celebrities with her daughter and her fond memories of her husband. She recommended to me that all couples if possible should take a year off from working and travel together when they are still 'young' enough to do so. She did that with her husband and will have those memories forever. That resonated with me. Diana clearly stays active and connected to family and friends, which all of the research on aging recommends that folks do. I think she is a wise and pragmatic person as well, a great combination." GL

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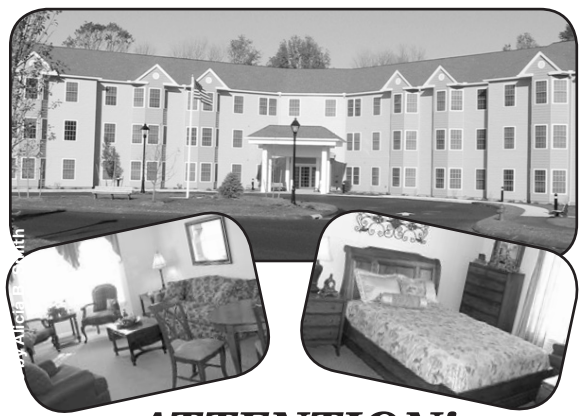

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Part of my job as an occupational therapist is helping to make tasks of daily living easier and more manageable for patients. Typically in therapy we work on addressing individuals' impairments to allow them full participation and quality of life in their everyday tasks.

Sometimes compensatory tools are helpful to let people achieve these tasks with independence. Here are a few helpful tools, gadgets and suggestions.

Elastic shoe laces
Make shoes easy to slip on and off and work well with a long-handled shoe horn. They're especially helpful for people who have trouble bending to reach their feet.

Button hook
A handy gadget to help with pulling buttons through button-down shirts or jackets is especially helpful for people with arthritis, numbness in their fingers, or decreased dexterity.

Reacher
Helps with grabbing hard-to-reach-items and is especially useful for people with poor balance or for preventing falls for people who have trouble bending to reach items.

Sock aid
Helps those who have trouble bending or have precautions against bending pull on their socks.

Leg lifter
Helps people with pain or weakness lift their legs in or out of their car or bed.

Zipper pull
Helps pull zippers up and down. Great for people with poor dexterity or visual impairments creating trouble finding their zipper or using it in a timely fashion.

Lift assist cushion
A non-electric and portable cushion that helps people out of a chair. Perfect for people who have already tried therapy training and strengthening and still need that little boost.

Swivel cushion
Turntable cushion that can help with pivoting in or out of a chair.

Shelf paper liner
Can be used as a non-skid material to place under wheelchair cushions or walker trays or used as a placement under plates, cups or utensils. A small piece works well to help people grip the top of a jar to open or close it more easily.

Handy bar
Portable grab bar that fits on all cars to help with sitting in or standing out of a car, providing a safe and sturdy bar to press down on.

Medisafe Meds and reminder phone app
Free pill reminder app for smartphones.

Bed assist bar
A bed rail that needs no installation and provides something for people to hold on to for improved mobility in bed and transfers into and out of bed.

Weighted utensils
Helpful in stabilizing tremors and cutting down on spillage when eating.

Rocker knife/pizza cutter
A useful tool for one-handed cutting for people who have had a stroke, amputation, paralysis or other issue. A piece of paper or Dycem non-slip material can be placed under the plate to prevent slipping.

Jar opener
Helps with gripping and opening jars. Especially helpful for people with decreased sensation, strength or dexterity in their hands.

1- to 2-inch pipe insulation
Cut into small segments and tape over feeding utensil handles, walker handles or writing implements to improve grip and maneuverability. Especially helpful for people with arthritis or a diminished grasp.

Book holder
Holds a book in place at the right page so people can focus their attention on reading rather than struggling to hold the book open. Especially helpful for people with arthritis, sensation deficits or the amputation of an upper extremity.

Card holder
Holds playing cards to keep people playing with their friends. Especially helpful for people with arthritis or decreased sensation. GL

Note: *People experiencing a new onset of any of the problems above should schedule an appointment with their physician and consider therapy treatments to assess the extent of the problem and provide exercises and education to prevent further damage.*

Submitted by Amanda Bierkan, homecare occupational therapist out of Hartford Health Care at Home.

The art of making new friends over 50

Friendships are good for your health. People who have close friends and confidants live longer than those who don't, according to an Australian study. The researchers even found that those with the largest number of friends survived the longest.

So how do you start? Here are a few tips for striking up a friendship when you're over 50.

Take possession of a place. Doing so both mentally and physically will make that space more personal.

Put yourself forward. The key to starting a friendship often means putting yourself out there first and not waiting for people to come to you.

Embrace relationships with both genders. Older people have more freedom to have those relationships without all the complications they had in their youth.

Reach out to people who are new to the community. This can be the key to a new relationship.

Put yourself out there. There are many ways to open the doors to friendships by simply getting out. GL

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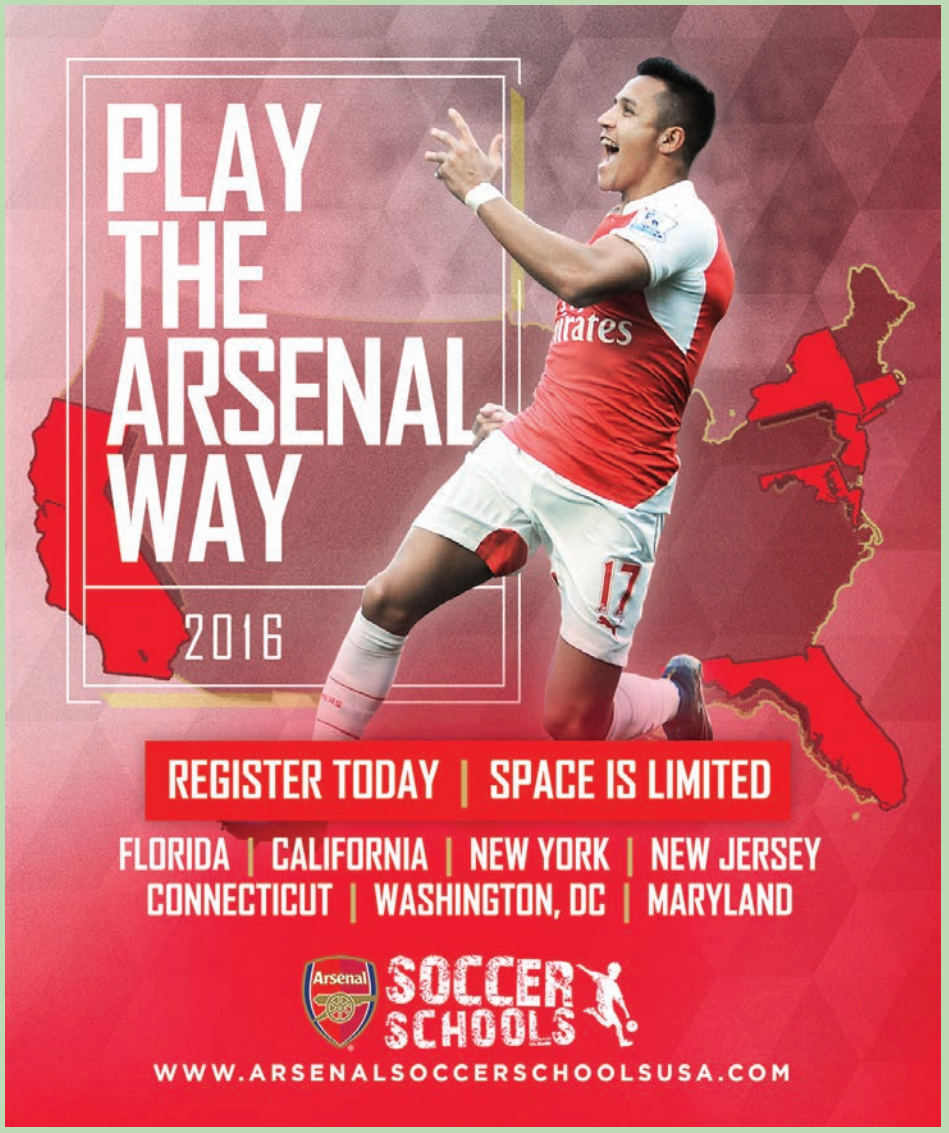

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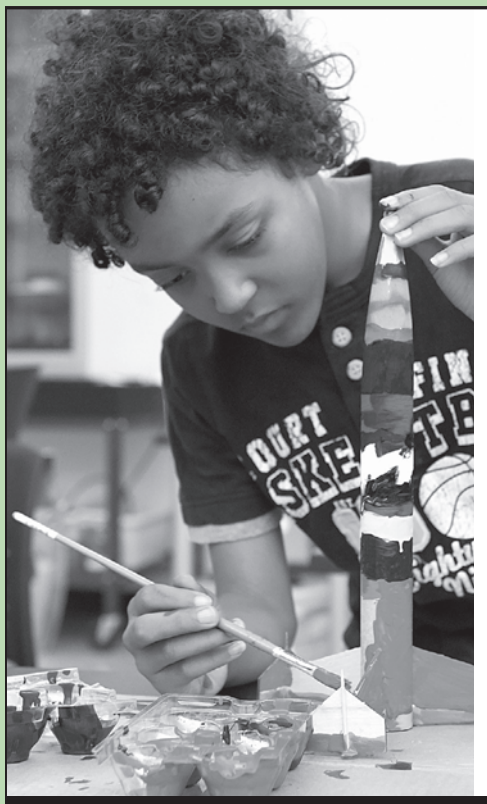

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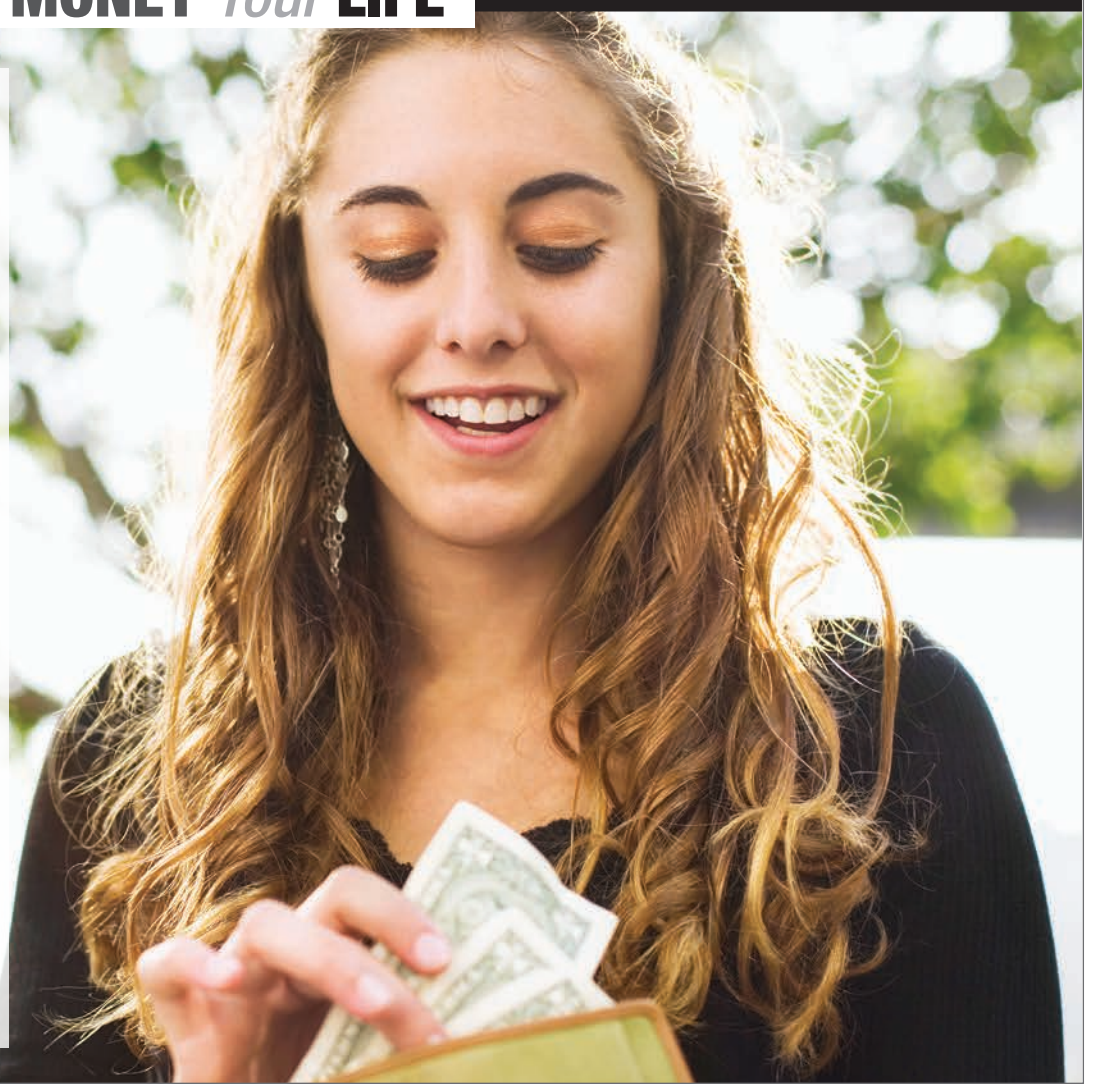
Planning to spend

How to manage disposable income

by Alison Jalbert
Assistant Editor



Whether a person is 28 or 68, they want to go to concerts, enjoy a meal at a restaurant with friends or take a trip. With the high cost of living and the importance of saving money, having funds for these "inessential" purchases may seem impossible.

Local experts say it is a possibility, as long as careful planning and budgeting is done.

Diane Fisher, senior vice president of investments with the FDW Group of Raymond James in West Hartford, said 'budget' is a word people of all ages balk at, but it's an important concept to grasp and execute. Certified Financial Planner Nancy Fellinger of planningWise Wealth in Simsbury agreed.

"For absolutely anyone at any stage in life, it's essential

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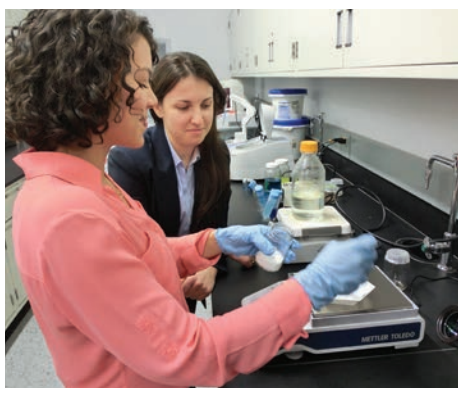
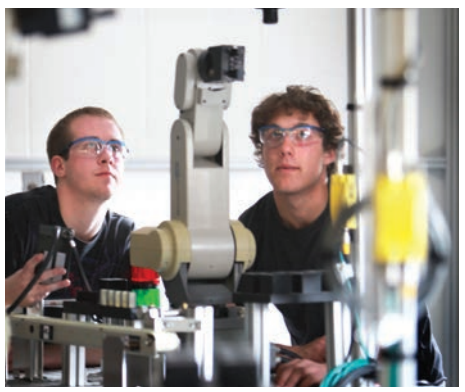

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to have a spending plan," she said. "I call it a spending plan as opposed to a budget because most people, I think, kind of bristle at the thought of a budget. They think, 'Oh, it's deprivation, the things I can't do because I'm on a budget.'"

The basic concept is to make sure all expenses are tracked, and identifying what is essential, Fellinger said. Putting that plan into practice is the challenge.

For the Millennial generation, those born in the early 1980s through the early 2000s, Fisher said setting up a good budget after graduating high school or college is "the most important thing." It can be easy to do; going online, there are many budget forms available, or, many financial advisors offer their services to young people for free.

"They can find a financial advisor who can help them set up a budget – there are a lot of goodhearted people out there who will spend the time," she said. "It's all overwhelming unless you have some certain knowledge of it."

Fisher acknowledged that saving money, especially for inessential spending, is difficult.

"The game changer is student loans," she said. "The money they used to put towards discretionary stuff [goes to loans] – they almost have another mortgage or rent."

Fellinger said the challenge many people have is not just distinguishing what qualifies as discretionary, but making choices between those items. If a person wants to watch a movie, do they go to the movies, or get a monthly Netflix account? If they want to go to the museum, do they wait and go on a free or reduced admission day or pay full price? If they want a cup of coffee in the morning, do they make it at home or stop at a coffee shop?

"It's about being conscious of not only what's being bought, but what other alternatives there are," she said. "Sometimes it comes down to, 'Yeah, I've thought about this, but this experience of having this cup of coffee means something to me and I'm going to make a choice to do that … I may need to make some changes in other areas of my life so I can do that and not be stretching myself.'"

When it comes to determining how much to set aside for discretionary spending, Fisher said it can be hard to calculate it, percentage-wise, but she recommends including everything someone wants to spend outside of the essentials. It's necessary to go through all expenses – Netflix may seem like only $9 a month and Hulu only $11 – to determine what truly is necessary.

Fellinger quoted baseball great Yogi Berra, who said, "Ninety percent of the game is half mental." Much of what drives the success of a spending plan is a person's outlook and how they approach it mentally.

"If we're doing it in a positive kind of way – this is something I can do, this is positive for myself, I feel really good about this – it's going to take [you] in one direction," she said. "If it's perceived as a drag or punishment, it's not going to be good."

Regardless of how limited a budget is, Fellinger said including disposable income as part of a budget is important, because the things it's spent on are what makes life enjoyable. She said people need to look at the entirety of their finances and other resources, including the time spent, energy invested and the return they get on an experience.

"If it's a matter that life is tight because of other necessary expenses – you're budgeting not with money, but with time," she said. "You're looking at expenses not just as dollars, but as time, as energy, as what is nurturing. … You can spend a lot of money on entertainment and still not feel fulfilled." GL

planningWise Wealth, part of Coburn & Meredith, Inc., is at 1 Old Mill Lane in Simsbury. Visit www.planningwisewealth.com or call 860-784-2605 for more information. FDW Advisory Group is located at 29 South Main St., Suite 210 in West Hartford. For more information, call 860-920-5040 or visit fdwgroup.website.raymondjames.com.

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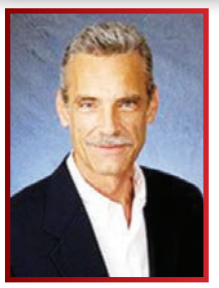

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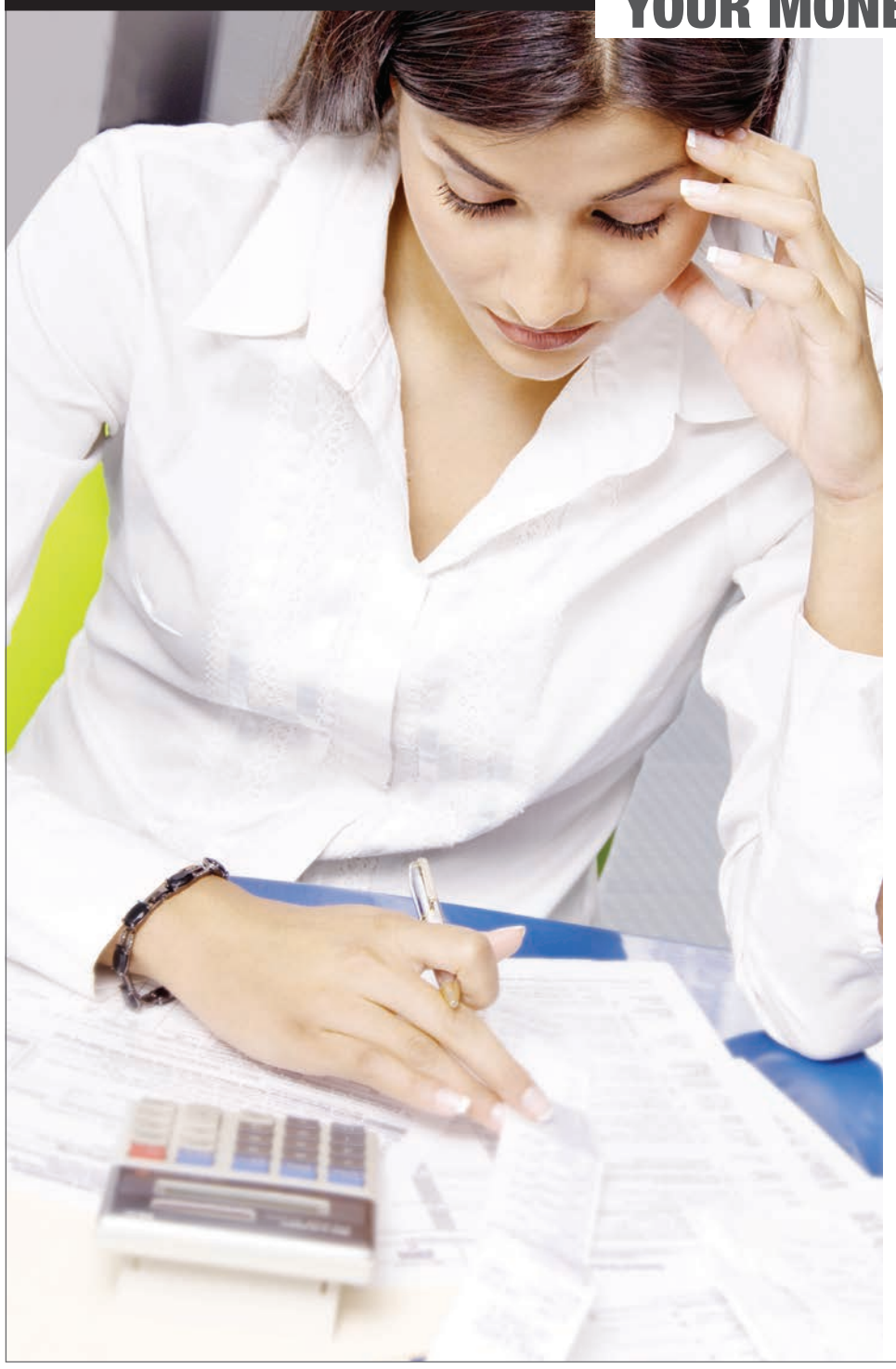

Tax return fraud is increasing

How to prevent it and what to do if it happens to you

by Nancy Thompson
Editor

Last year, the state of Connecticut stopped about $38 million in fraudulent tax returns, about double the amount from the year before. In 2012, the amount was about $7 million.

To say it's become an epidemic is an understatement.

"It's a constant, constant battle," said Kevin Sullivan, commissioner of the state's Department of Revenue Services. "There are more breaches and more energetic thieves, but we're working harder and smarter."

Fraudulent tax returns have become a big issue for states and for the federal government, and all are taking precautions to prevent them.

"We're doing a number of things," Sullivan said, adding that the department cannot reveal all of its new measures. "We have three layers of screening on all returns. We use comparison data, and this year, employers' W-2 forms will come in January instead of March so we'll have that information. We have definitely and deliberately slowed down, and first-time filers will not have the option of direct deposit. Where we see issues we want to buy time."

He said taxpayers filing state returns electronically can use the taxpayer service center's online site, which is highly secure and available at no charge, and urged people hiring a tax accountant to be sure the person is reputable.

"The Better Business Bureau is a good source, and seniors and people on limited incomes can have their returns done at their senior center or through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program sponsored by the Internal Revenue Service," Sullivan said.

Taxpayers can do their part to help, too. Filing early is an effective way to deter thieves.

"The sooner you file, the less likely it is that some crook will file before you do," Sullivan said.

Bruce Filingeri, a certified public accountant and tax partner at Sheptoff, Reuber and Company, P.C. in Glastonbury, offers clients several tips to

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March Events

Interviewing Tips Workshop. 3/1, 2 p.m. and 3/2, 12 noon, SSC L107. Learn the various stages of the interviewing process. Job seekers will gain insight into frequently-asked interview questions and other tips that can help lead to a successful interview. Info: Julie Greene at 860-512-3372 or email jgreene@manchestercc.edu.

MCC Community Science Lecture Series. 3/2, 4 p.m., LRC A142. Dr. Kate McDonald, MCC lecturer in general biology, presents "The Neurobiology of Birdsong: Changes in Neuron Structure and Vocal Learning in the Adult Zebra Finch." Info: Pam McManus at 860-512-2738 or email pmcmanus@manchestercc.edu.

Health Careers Admission Information Sessions: Students interested in being admitted into a Health Careers credit program must attend a mandatory information session before applying. Info: Theresa Blake at 860-512-2704 or email tblake@manchestercc.edu.

Radiologic Science. 3/4, 10 a.m., LRC A244
Dental Assistant. 3/11, 10 a.m., LRC A244
Respiratory Care. 3/11, 11 a.m., LRC B129

The Common Read Book Discussion: "*The Beach*" by Alex Garland. 3/4 and 3/11, 12:30 p.m., LRC A121, Library. Please join us for great discussion and good company while exploring a captivating read, *The Beach*, by Alex Garland. Info: Rosalyn Wormack at 860-512-2618 or email rwormack@manchestercc.edu.

Job Search and Cover Letters Workshop. 3/8, 2 p.m., and 3/9, 12 noon, SSC L107. Identify strategies and techniques for managing a comprehensive and effective job search and maximize the impact of a cover letter. Info: Julie Greene at 860-512-3372 or email jgreene@manchestercc.edu.

International Film Series: *Creed* (USA). 3/11, 7 p.m., SBM Charitable Foundation Auditorium. Adonis Johnson never knew his famous father, world heavyweight champion Apollo Creed. Still, there's no denying that boxing is in his blood, so Adonis heads to Philadelphia, the site of Apollo Creed's legendary match with a tough upstart named Rocky Balboa. 132 mins. Drama. English. Rated PG-13. Info: Evelyn Angry-Smith at 860-512-2874, email eangry-smith@manchestercc.edu or visit libguides.manchestercc.edu/mccifs.

Concert with MCC Chorale & Madrigal Singers and Westfield State University Chorale. 3/12, 2 p.m., SBM Charitable Foundation Auditorium. Join us for a delightful choral concert. Info: Carolina Flores at 860-512-5640 or email cflores@manchestercc.edu.

Making Effective Career Choices Workshop. 3/15, 2 p.m., and 2/16, 12 noon, SSC L107. Learn how to make effective career choices through the use of traditional and online career-guidance assessment tools. Match your interests and personality types with career fields and traditional position titles, identify typical educational paths that one can take to become qualified for specific positions, and learn about available online resources that can assist you in your research process. Info: Julie Greene at 860-512-3372 or email jgreene@manchestercc.edu.

Joint Forum on Inequality. 3/17, 12 noon, SBM Charitable Foundation Auditorium. The 2nd Joint Forum on Inequality will focus on ways we can address the issue individually and collectively. Prof. Meghan Finley and Maria Koistinen will present and discuss how to get involved with service learning and the MCC Institute for Community Engagement and Outreach; Prof. Rebecca Townsend and student leader Gordon Plouffe will facilitate a National Issues Forum discussion on "How Do We Make Ends Meet?" Info: Maura O'Connor at 860-512-2692 or email moconnor@manchestercc.edu.

Luncheon and History of Cheney Silks. 3/30, 12 noon, SSC Culinary Arts Center. Enjoy a delicious lunch prepared and served by MCC hospitality management and culinary arts students. Guest speaker Carol Cheney will share the history of the Cheney silks on display in the dining room. Tickets: $20, reservations must be made in advance. Info: Diana Reid at 860-512-2909 or email dreid@manchestercc.edu.

Women's History Month Luncheon. 3/31, 12 noon, SSC L103. Cynthia Wolfe Boynton, an award-winning author, will talk about her book, *Remarkable Women of Hartford*. Info: Nylsa Ubarri-Young at 860-512-3324 or email nubarri-young@manchestercc.edu.

The Common Read Presents Dr. Giles Wayland-Smith. 3/31, 1 p.m., SBM Auditorium. Dr. Giles Wayland-Smith, an Oneida descendent, will detail the fascinating story of the Oneida Community and its successor, OCL, and will argue that many of their values and practices provide all of us with a "teaching moment" in the 21st century. Info: Rosalyn Wormack at 860-512-2618 or email rwormack@manchestercc.edu.

All events are free and open to the public, unless otherwise noted, and are subject to change without notice. For current information or notices of cancellation, click on "View All Events" on MCC's web site: www.manchestercc.edu.

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minimize the chance of becoming the victim of identity theft and the possibility of having their tax return filed fraudulently. He tells clients not to carry their Social Security card or any other document with a Social Security number on it; not to give a business their Social Security number unless required; protect financial information; check their credit report every 12 months; keep personal information in your home secure; and to protect personal computers by using firewalls and anti-spam/virus software, updating security patches and changing passwords for Internet accounts.

Matt Hill, a certified public accountant and tax expert with an office in Wethersfield, offered tips for decreasing the likelihood of a fraudulent tax return and advice to anyone who learns their taxes have been filed fraudulently.

"In order to minimize the likelihood of someone filing your taxes before you, don't give out your Social Security number or birthdate or prepare your taxes utilizing an unsecure network," he said. "You would be surprised how many individuals file their taxes at Starbucks or Burger King."

When taxpayers file early, it provides a two-week window for the government to deposit a refund into a fraudster's account. If it does happen, he offers this suggestion: "If you discover your taxes have been filed fraudulently, even though you may face a long wait time on the phone, contact the tax authorities immediately. Doing so may save you significant time waiting for the IRS or state to sort through the fraud and allow you to properly file your returns."

An unwelcome surprise

Many taxpayers have no idea that someone else has stolen their information and filed their tax return until they get a letter from the IRS.

"Dear Taxpayer," it reads. "Someone may have attempted to impersonate you by using your name and Social Security number …"

The letter goes on to explain that the IRS has removed the incorrect return and corrected the bad information and will flag the account for extra scrutiny in the future.

This year, the IRS is also assigning personal identification numbers to taxpayers whose accounts have been hacked, which should help prevent a recurrence, but millions of others are still at risk.

A recent bulletin issued by the IRS lists several steps, including more than 20 pieces of shared data to help the software industry and the IRS stop fraudulent returns. More information on the new steps are detailed online at irs.gov/Individuals/Taxes-Security-Together and IRS publication 4524.

Sullivan tells anyone who believes their tax return was filed fraudulently despite the new safeguards: "Call the IRS or the DRS immediately or go to either agency immediately online," he said, adding that taxpayers who may have a problem will hear about it by mail. GL

Save money, maximize flavor

Making the most out of a trip to the meat counter

by Sloan Brewster
Senior Staff Writer

Saving money at the meat counter doesn't mean cutting back on flavor. Local experts say there are cuts of meat that taste great without making a dent in your grocery budget.

Brian DeVoe, owner of Fitzgerald's Foods in Simsbury, suggested London Broil as a delicious cut of meat that costs a little less.

To make it more tender, it can be marinated, he said. The longer you marinate it, the more flavorful and tender it will be.

Cube and sandwich steaks are also less pricey, DeVoe said. Cube steaks are tenderized in the store. He suggests breading them and cooking them with gravy, peppers and onions.

"They're very affordable and they make a really good meal," he said.

A good way to cook sandwich steaks, which are thinner, is to pan fry them with olive oil and garlic.

Sirloin strips are naturally tender pieces of meat and can be used in recipes such as Beef Stroganoff, over egg noodles, or cooked with olive oil and salt pepper and put on a salad.

"There's a lot of things you can do with it, and they're very affordable," DeVoe said.

Pot roast or bottom round roast beef are a more affordable cut of meat, he said. Bottom roast is best cooked as a pot roast in broth or gravy because it gets tenderer.

"You can get a lot of meals out a pot roast," DeVoe said.

Ground beef is another way to save money and can be used for meatloaf or Salisbury steaks, he said.

When shopping for ground beef, go for ground chuck verses ground sirloin, said Jim Hasch, meet manager, at West Side Marketplace in Rocky Hill.

A nice cut of steak for a good price is petit sirloin.

"That's a nice cut and it's a little less expensive than a rib eye," he said. "It may be a little tougher than a [New York] strip. ... It's still a nice and tender."

When looking for a good price on chicken, go for the thighs and legs, anything with dark meat, they all said, or wait for periodic specials on boneless breasts.

Although chicken is generally affordable, DeVoe said chicken tenderloins are cheaper than breasts.

A nice meal with boneless breasts is to add Cajun seasoning, cut it up and add it to a salad.

"It's a quick, affordable meal," DeVoe said. "If you like the dark meat, you can do the exact same recipe and it's far less expensive – that's probably $2 a pound less."

Pork is generally affordable, DeVoe said. Boneless is a little more expensive, he said, and the bone adds flavor anyway.

Lamb, while more expensive than most meat, also comes in cheaper cuts, the men said.

For a stew, get the shoulder and buy it the bone in it, Hasch said.

There's a time for leg of lamb too, he added.

"Lamb legs may be expensive, but you're going to get a lot more yield. There's less waste. ... You use the whole thing." **GL**

Fitzgerald's Foods is located at 710 Hopmeadow St. in Simsbury. For more information, call 860-658-2271 or visit www.fitzgeraldsfoods.com. West Side Marketplace can be found at 887 Cromwell Ave. in Rocky Hill. Call 860-529-2200 or visit www.west-side-market.com for more information. The Farmington location of Highland Park Market is at 204 Main St. Call 860-674-9536 or visit www.highlandparkmarket.com for more information.

Additional tips for saving on groceries

Brian DeVoe, owner of Fitzgerald's Foods in Simsbury, said to shop the fliers.

"That's where we make the biggest cuts," he said, "and then look for in-store specials."

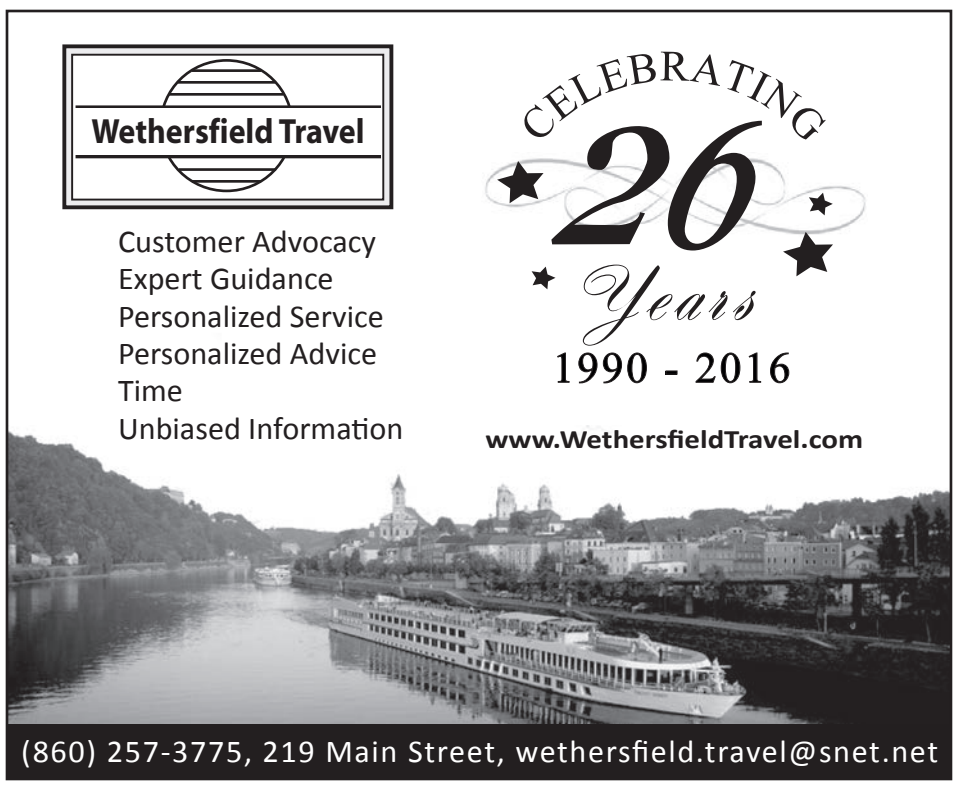
There are also specials in every aisle.

Brian Gibbons, store manager at Highland Park Market in Farmington, said to check out the store's weekly flier.

Look for mid-week specials, Gibbons added. Every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each department in the store has specials.

There are also specials every weekend in the meat and grocery departments and in the bakery that are not in flyer but are posted in store and online.

"That is really aggressive savings that we do every weekend," Gibbons said.



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Selene

Georgette is a 6-year-old female domestic short hair cat. She has a sweet disposition and would fare well with children of any age. The slightest bit of attention gets her purring. Georgette is a polydactyl feline, meaning she has more toes than a typical domestic cat.

Missy

Missy is a 5-year-old female terrier/pit bull mix. She loves attention and doesn't make too much noise. Nothing makes her happier than to snooze with her head in someone's lap. She can be a couch potato and has previous experience living with other digs and cats. A single-family house or condominium would be fine. Missy would mesh with children of any age and needs daily exercise. **GL**

Getting Married?
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LIFE is interested in publishing engagement and wedding announcements. Send them to LIFE Editor at 540 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT 06070 or e-mail aalbair@turleyct.com. There is no charge.

Business Notes

Joshua Gottfried and **Matthew Somberg**, principals and founding partners, and **Kathleen Erickson** and **Daniel Heffernan,** wealth advisors at Gottfried & Somberg Wealth Management LLC, have been named Five Star Wealth Managers for 2015.

This is the sixth consecutive time Gottfried and Somberg have been awarded this title. Kathleen Erickson and Daniel Heffernan have won it twice.

Neil Scranton, regional president at GoodWorks Insurance, is celebrating his 40th year as an independent insurance agent and entrepreneur. Scranton co-founded Scranton & Johnson Inc., a local independent insurance agency in 1975 and sold the company to GoodWorks Insurance in 2012.

Monaco Ford has hired T.J. Selig as sales manager. Selig, formerly of Mitchell Selig Ford, has 46 years of experience in the automotive industry. He will co-manage the sales department and manage the used car department. **GL**

People Notes

Giana DiNatale, a senior at Glastonbury High School, played the double bass as part of the High School Honors Symphony Orchestra in a concert at Carnegie Hall. Giana was one of 750 musicians selected from more than 18,000 students who were nominated to perform in one of five honor ensembles. She is the second young musician in her family to perform at the famed concert venue. Her sister, Sofia, performed on piano there two years ago.

Matt Necci has been elected to the board of directors of Leadership Greater Hartford. He is a partner at Halloran & Sage LLP and also serves on the board of directors for Special Olympics CT.

State Rep. **Prasad Srinivasan** (R-Glastonbury) has been named national co-chairman of the Health Police Council. Srinivasan will serve alongside Dan Morhaim, a Democrat. Both men are physicians. Srinivasan is the ranking House Republican member of the Connecticut General Assembly's Public Health Committee. **GL**

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Slice of LIFE

photos by Brian Ambrose

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Enjoying the fresh snow!

Finally the snow came and many local kids headed out to try their sleds and saucers under bright blue with 10 inches of new snow. **1.** Audry Greco, 8, takes flight on the hill. **2.** Sarah Wechsler, 5, is ready to go. **3.** John Redfern, 11, keeps it under control. **4.** Troy Greco gets a quick start from his mom, Alexa. **5.** Ariana Pagel and her best friend Hannah Breiner, both 12, love the fresh snow. **6.** Brenna Gregorski, 7, tries out her new snowboard. **7.** Ted Gregorski and his three-year-old daughter, Teagan, take a run down the hill. **8.** Ready set go! Amy Leppert launches her daughter Natalie, 8, down the hill. **9.** Elliott Leppert is learns how to fly. **10.** Will Desantos, 11, launches himself down. **11.** Wyatt Desantos, 7, gets the big jump in. **12.** Dean Breiner, 11, comes to a screeching halt in the snow. **13.** Haley Evans, 9, screams down the hill. **14.** Katarina Dominguez, 12, and Kara Rondinelli, 12, share a thrill ride.

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News roundup

Courtesy photos

Zelda Lessne has retired

Zelda Lessne has retired as the town's Democratic registrar of voters. She's shown with Bill Dufford (left) and Peter Alter (right) at her recent retirement party. Lessne was appointed deputy registrar in 2003 and has been elected registrar since 2006.

Marchetti seeks GOP nomination

Lorraine Marchetti will seek the Republican nomination for the Connecticut State Senate's Fourth District.

Marchetti and her husband, Bob, have lived in Glastonbury for more than 30 years. During that time, she has served on the town's board of education, including seven years as vice-chairman, and on the town council, where she was vice-chairman from 2011 to 2013.

In announcing her candicacy, Marchetti called for change. "I have long been concerned about the direction in which Connecticut is headed," she said. "We desperately need a new vision for our state, a vision that requires changes to how business is conducted in Hartford."

Marchetti, a native of Lewiston, Maine, moved to the state to attend the University of Connecticut, where she earned bachelor's and master's degrees. She joined the UConn Foundation and worked on the university's first-ever capital campaign.

The Marchettis have three daughters, Christine, Lauren and Kathryn.

The Fourth District is represented by State Sen. Steve Cassano, a Democrat from Manchester.

To learn more about Marchetti's candidacy, call her at 860-836-7637 or visit Lorraine4CT.com.

Welles Tavern registration open

Registrations are being accepted for the annual recreation of the Welles Tavern at the Welles-Shipman-Ward House. The event, which will include an authentic Colonial-era supper of ham, hot slaw, cheese and homemade bread and apple

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pie and interactions with actors portraying visitors arriving at the tavern, will take place April 2 from 6 to 8 p.m. A limited number of seats will be available, and guests are encouraged to reserve a spot well before that date by contacting the Historical Society of Glastonbury at 860-633-6890 or sending an email to HSGlastonbury@sbcglobal.net. Admission is $35.

Property tax relief available

The social services department and assessor's office are accepting applications for state and local tax relief programs.

Income, age and other restrictions apply to the programs, and documentation is required.

Anyone who wants more information, an application or an appointment may call the social services department at 860-652-7634 for further information or to request any application or to make an appointment. Anyone filing federal income tax is asked to wait until that is done before making an appointment.

Hebron Avenue students celebrate 100 days

Celebrations of the 100th day of the school year are fairly common, but the children at Hebron Avenue School have added a new twist.

Each grade level chose a special project and then worked to collect at least 100 items to help that group.

This year, the kindergarten classes donated more than 140 pairs of socks to an orphanage in Haiti. First-graders collected toys for the Connecticut Children's Medical Center. Second-graders amassed toiletries for the town's food bank, while third-graders collected 400 pantry items for the Hockanum Valley Community Council. Fourth-grade students collected food, supplies, toys and blankets for animals in shelters, and children in fifth grade collected toiletry items for men and women serving in the military overseas.

"Our students at each grade level went way over their goal of collecting 100 items," school Principal Linda Provost said. "We learned that it is important to give back to our community and that it feels good to do something special for others."

Hebron Avenue students celebrate 100 days

Student art on display

The annual display of work selected for the Glastonbury Public Schools calendar can be seen on the lower level of town hall through April8.

The 14 student artists were honored by the board of education and given awards by board Chairman Susan Karp.

This year's calendar art was done by Keven Cosgel (cover), Audrey McDaniel (January), Ariana Turi (February), Nathan LaChance (March), Megan Cooke (April), Donouvict Cosalan (May), Wolfgang Bodge (June), Brendan Sowka (July), Allison Desmarais (August), Bokyeong Emily Cho (September), Bella Brown (October), Alexa Bogoian (November), Jillian Edwards (December), and Andrew Clarkin (supplemental pages). **GL**

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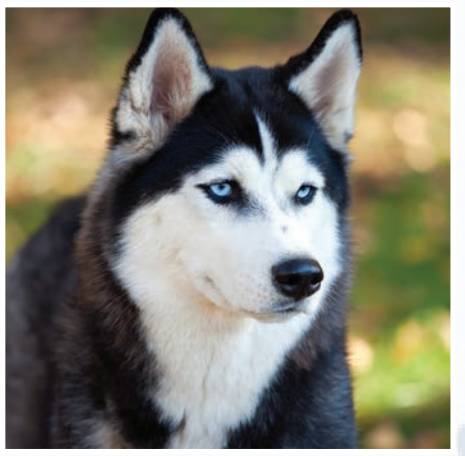

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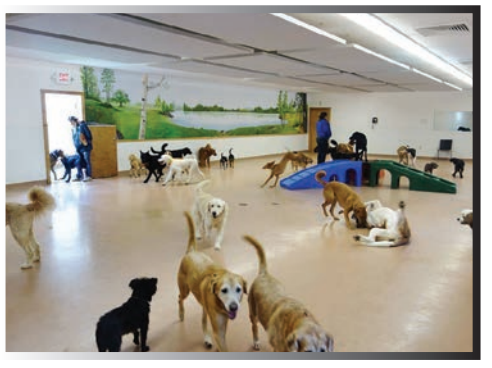

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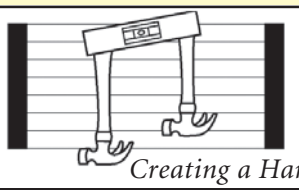

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Note from Nancy

The domino effect

Dominoes? Really?

Yes, really.

I never played dominoes until a few years ago. I knew the game existed but thought it was for little kids – the unbearable thrill of matching all those dots, and all – and for folks who were, for one reason or another, unable to do anything more exciting.

That changed when we visited my college roommate and her husband in Florida a few months after they retired.

They pulled out a metal box of dominoes along with several little plastic train engines and other accessory items after dinner. What I said was, "Okay," but what I was thinking was, "Dominoes? Really??"

That was about 8 p.m. By the time we went to bed, after 2 the next morning, I was hooked.

We stayed up late again the next night and the night after. We were playing Mexican Train, a version of dominoes that involves chess-like strategy and, just to even everything out a bit, a lot of luck.

We returned to Connecticut, bought our own Mexican Train set, and then couldn't find anyone to play with. We visited friends who'd just moved from this area to a new home in Vermont and gave them a big box of dominoes with a battery-operated train that made choo-choo noises as a housewarming gift in the hope that they'd enjoy playing as much as we did.

My friend's response was basically, "Dominoes? Really?"

Hah. They loved it.

My husband and I chuckled when they both caught on to the strategy and started playing with the appropriate nastiness. They eventually shared the game with other friends, spreading Mexican Train joy throughout northern Vermont.

When our Florida friends visited us at our vacation home the next year they brought us our very own big metal box of dominoes and little plastic trains so we'd be ready to play any time we were there. Two more late nights ensued.

It was frustrating. We could play in Florida and Vermont but not around here.

So one night, when our significantly younger next-door neighbors invited us to visit, we took our Mexican Train set with us. The wife's reaction was predictable: "Dominoes? Really??" A couple of hours later she was playing with a vengeance. Unfortunately, her husband, an avid and skillful poker player, just didn't get into it, and we haven't played since. We keep looking for local competition, so far without luck.

In the meantime, we gave our five-year-old granddaughter a set of dominoes for Christmas. There are no little plastic trains and no dots. She'll learn to play by matching Disney princesses instead.

Maybe some day she'll have a Mexican Train set and will share it with a friend who will say: "Dominoes? Cool!"

– Nancy Thompson

Letter

Lessne praised

To the Editor:

Zelda Lessne has retired from the position of Democratic Registrar of Voters. She was first appointed as deputy in 2003 and has been elected as registrar since 2006. She had a successful career prior to becoming active in the voter registration process, so this would have been a retirement job. Zelda never treated it as a part-time job because she worked extra hours to insure that Glastonbury voters had full access to the voter process.

Over the past 13 years, Glastonbury has been recognized by the Connecticut's Secretary of State and other organizations for our high voter participation, which was a reflection of Zelda's hard work.

She facilitated the conversion of voting from old technology to our new tabulators and insured that Glastonbury voters received training on the new equipment. Zelda has been active in state conventions, regional meetings and classes to insure she was current on all new legislation and procedures affecting Glastonbury voters.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Zelda for all of her efforts and hard work.

–Charlie Murray
Chair, Glastonbury Democratic Town Committee

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BY MARK DIXON
WFSB METEOROLOGIST [AMS]

Spring Forward

After hitting rock bottom daylight-wise back on the Winter Solstice in December, we've been steadily gaining daylight (recently 2-3 min/day). We'll continue to do so as we head toward the summer solstice (June 20th). And this month, two important things happen pertaining to the Sun:

(1) On Sunday, the 13th, Daylight Saving Time (DST) kicks off – officially at 2am. This is when we set our clocks ahead one hour, to reallocate time from the morning to the afternoon. It's easiest to turn clocks ahead an hour before going to sleep Saturday; then on Sunday, the sun rises at 7:05am and sets at 6:56pm. It's also a good time to put fresh batteries in the smoke detectors!

(2) One week later, on the 20th, is the vernal equinox in the Northern Hemisphere – the official beginning of spring (at 12:30am). The term "equinox" is Latin, referring to the days of the year when there is equal day and equal night – when the Earth's axis is not tilting in either direction toward or away from the Sun (also occurring in September with the transition from summer to autumn). However, the exact timing is more of an approximate - on the 20th we will actually have 12 hours and 10 minutes of possible daylight (sunrise 6:53am, sunset 7:04p). GL

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97 JONATHAN TRAIL

Glastonbury $749,000
Experience in person, the exceptional quality of the Homes at Pine Ridge! Additional homes also available. 5 beds; 4 baths; 3325 sq. ft.

16 SUNRISE DRIVE

Glastonbury $359,900
Freshly renovated Ranch. New Kitchen with granite. Master Suite with dual closets and tiled shower. 3 beds; 2.1 baths; 1724 sq. ft.

18 BRADLEY WAY

Glastonbury $799,500
Expansive gourmet kitchen w/granite counters, double ovens & butler's galley pantry and more! 5 beds; 3.1 baths; 4889 sq. ft.

286 COLDBROOK ROAD

Glastonbury $499,900
Truly special Ted Cox Architect designed - fabulous open floor plan, great interior architectural detail. 4 beds; 3.2 baths; 3222 sq. ft.

27 ALLSPICE LANE

Glastonbury $158,000
Great end unit, all new appliances, freshly painted interior, new hardwood floors; remodeled full bath. 2 beds; 1.1 baths; 1098 sq. ft.

36 FOUNDERS ROAD

Glastonbury $500,000
House package w/purchase of LOT E-4 FOUNDERS RD & contract w/builder for house plan. LOT E-4 w/o house package also avail.

93 MOTT LANE

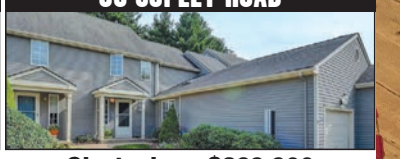
Glastonbury $699,900
1st fl. master; 240 feet lake front w/dock. Also listed w/boat, riding mower; golf cart, etc. $799,900. 4 beds; 3 baths; 4776 sq. ft.

53 OVERSHOT DRIVE

Glastonbury $339,900
Townhouse style condo w/many updates including central air, hot water heater, full-house generator. 2 beds; 2.1 baths; 2197 sq. ft.

203 SHODDY MILL ROAD

Glastonbury $429,000
Perfectly remodeled home; beautiful kitchen w/ stainless appliances & granite counters. 4 beds; 3.1 baths; 3290 sq. ft.

36 COPLEY ROAD


Glastonbury $269,900
Open floorplan, finished basement, hardwood floors, wood burning fireplace. Move in ready! 2 beds; 2.1 baths; 1488 sq. ft.

32 JONATHAN TRAIL

Glastonbury $739,999
Homes at Pine Ridge New Construction - available 2016 - still time to pick your paint colors! 4 beds; 3.1 baths; 335 sq. ft.

320 KINNE ROAD

Glastonbury $750,000
Expansive Elkins model home in very popular neighborhood of Toll homes. 2nd floor master suite. 5 beds; 5.1 baths; 5229 sq. ft.

286 COLDBROOK ROAD

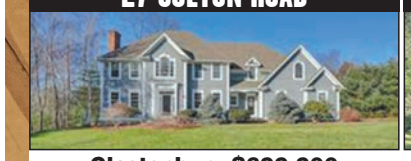
Glastonbury $569,900
Beautifully maintained home in like new condition in a private country setting. Over 3 Acres!!! 5 beds; 3.1 baths; 3492 sq. ft.

584 BIRCH MOUNTAIN ROAD

Glastonbury $1,075,000
Exceptional estate property; custom brick home in an orchard; exceptional architectural detail. 4 beds; 6.1 baths; 6191 sq. ft.

90 INDIAN HILL TRAIL

Glastonbury $269,900
Open floor plan/spacious layout. Great room with cozy fireplace. Large master bedroom w/bath. 4 beds; 3 baths; 1630 sq. ft.

27 COLTON ROAD


Glastonbury $699,900
Spacious kitchen featuring cherry cabinets, granite island and over-sized pantry for extra storage. 5 beds; 3.1 baths; 4046 sq. ft.

235 WEST ROAD

Glastonbury $219,900
This beautifully maintained home is a great value! Versatile open floorplan, the home is light & bright. 3 beds; 2.1 baths; 1717 sq. ft.

90 ADDISON ROAD

Glastonbury $229,900
Classic New England style in this 1740 historic home located near Addison Pond. 3 bed; 2 bath; 1546 sq. ft.

78 JOBS POND ROAD

Glastonbury $409,900
Remodeled, completely move in ready Colonial. Kitchen is a Chef's Delight! Gleaming hardwood floors. 4 beds; 2.1 baths; 2802 sq. ft.

100 ADDISON ROAD

Glastonbury $449,900
Beautiful Post & Beam built home with very open floor plan. Pond views! 3 beds; 2.1 baths; 2528 sq. ft.

LOT 25 MENLO PLACE

Glastonbury $529,900
Stainless, granite, hardwood floors, tile baths & laundry. Bonus room on 2nd floor. 55+ community! 3 beds; 2.1 baths; 1944 sq. ft.

ADENA'S WALK DEVELOPMENT

Glastonbury $446,900
#18 Tarragon Model with the most contemporary feel of all our models. 3 beds; 2.1 baths; 2266 sq. ft. Additional Units available. 55+.

28 FAWN RUN

Glastonbury $750,900
Dramatic home located in a quiet cul de sac community. Extensively remodeled. 4 beds; 4.1 baths; 5076 sq. ft.

397 OVERLOOK ROAD

Glastonbury $399,900
New roof and exterior paint; refinished hardwood floors; open floor plan; large family room. 4 beds; 3.1 baths; 3786 sq. ft.

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121 Chamberlain Ln., 2.53 acres **$299,900**
125 Chamberlain Ln., 2.56 acres **$239,000**
Lot E-4 Founders Rd., 0.58 acres, also w/building plan: 36 Founders Rd. **$125,000**

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